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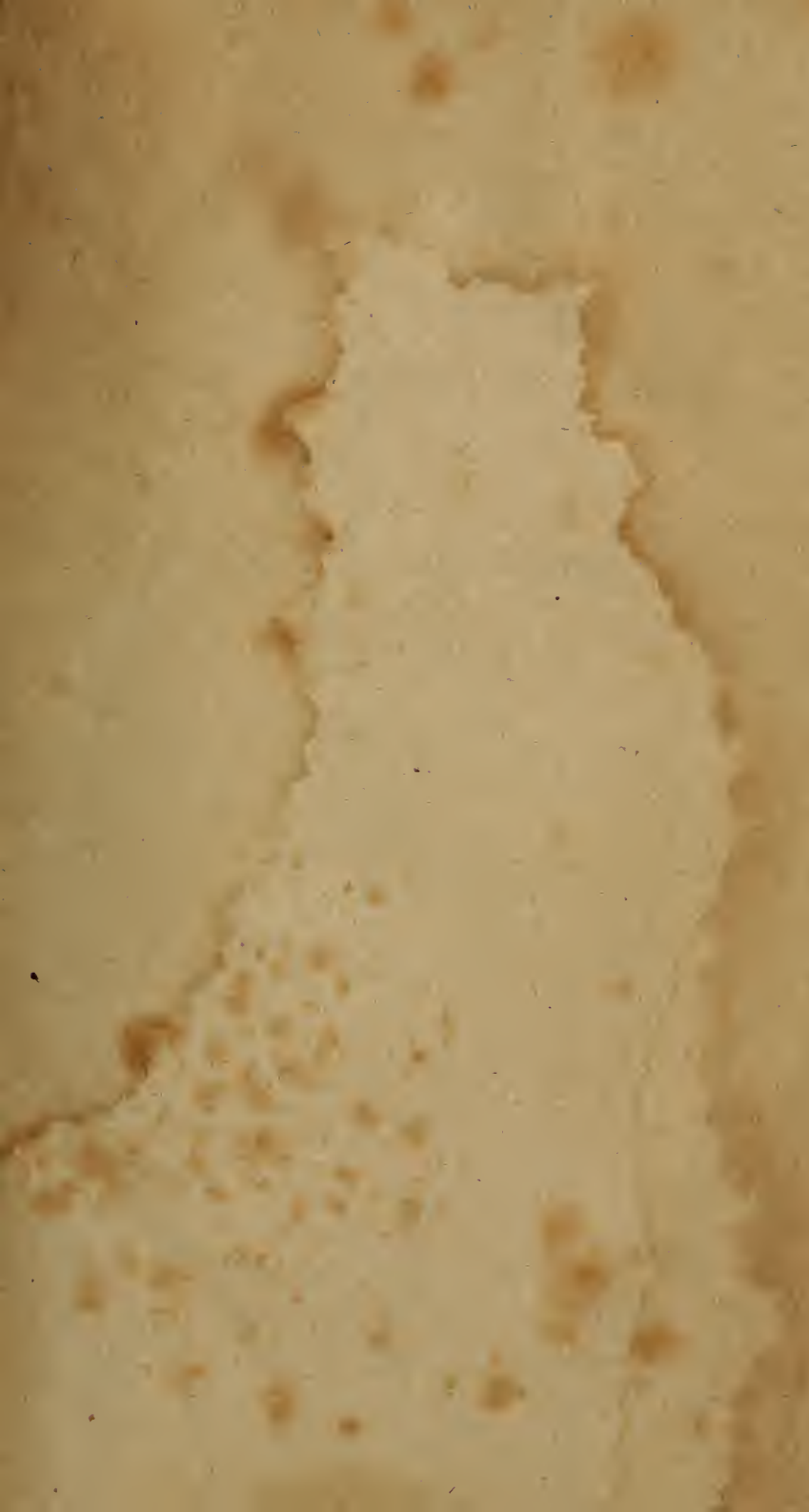
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AN

**EXPOSITION**

OF THE

**EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS;**

WITH THE

**PRELIMINARY EXERCITATIONS.**

✓  
BY JOHN OWEN, D. D.

REVISED AND ABRIDGED;

WITH

A FULL AND INTERESTING LIFE OF THE AUTHOR, A COPIOUS  
INDEX, &c.

BY EDWARD WILLIAMS, D. D.

Search the Scriptures.....JOHN v, 39.

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AN  
**EXPOSITION.**

CHAPTER I.

VERSES 1, 2.

*God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.*

§1. The apostle's design. §2. The subject stated. §3. (I.) The law and gospel both agree in having God for their author. §4—6. (II.) The difference as to their revelation consists 1. In the times of their promulgation. §7—9 2. The manner of it. §10, 11. 3. Persons employed. §12. (III.) Jewish prejudices against the gospel obviated, by attending to §13. 1. The just statement of God's revealing his will by his Son. §14. 2. Several excellencies attending the revelation itself. §15. 3. The concessions of the Jews. §16. 4. The dignity and glory of Christ the revealer, who is, §17—20. (1.) Heir of all. §21. (2.) By appointment. And §22—24. (3.) Maker of the world. §25—36. (IV.) Doctrinal and practical observations.

§1. **T**HE apostle's grand design, throughout this epistle is, to engage the Hebrews to constancy and perseverance in their attachment to the gospel with its fundamental doctrines; and his main argument, for that purpose, is taken from the *immediate author*, the promised Messiah, the Son of God. Him, therefore, in this chapter, he describes at large, declaring what he is *absolutely*, in his person and offices, and *comparatively*, with respect to other ministerial revealers of the mind and will of God; principally insisting on his excellency and pre-eminence above angels.

§2. A *comparison* being intended in these verses between the Mosaical law and the gospel, and particularly in reference to their revelation and institution, the apostle shews;

I. Wherein the law and gospel in that view do both agree.

II. Wherein the gospel *differs* from the law. And then,

III. He obviates the great Jewish prejudice against the gospel, by the consideration of Christ's superior excellency. After the discussion of these points, we shall,

IV. Make some doctrinal and practical observations on the whole.

§3. (I.) That wherein the law and gospel, as to their promulgation, do both *agree*, is, that (*ὁ θεός*) *God* was the author of each. About this there was no difference, as to most of them to whom the apostle immediately wrote, which, therefore, he takes for granted. For the professing Jews did not adhere to Mosaical institutions, because God was the author of *these*, and *not* of the gospel; but because, as they apprehended, they were given from God by Moses as unalterable. Now *God* being here spoken of in distinction from the Son, expressly, and from the Holy Ghost, by evident implication; that term, be it observed, is not taken to denote primarily the *essence* or being of the Deity, but one *certain person*, and the divine nature only as subsisting in that person, which is, the *Father*; so that he, by way of eminency, was the peculiar author of the law and gospel. Besides, he immediately assigns divine properties and excellencies unto *another* person, evidently distinguished from him whom he denotes by the name God in this place; which he could not do, did that name absolutely express the divine nature. From this head of their *agreement*, the apostle proceeds,

§4. (II.) To the instances of *difference* that was between the law and the gospel, as to their revelation; and these refer to the *times*, the *manners*, and *persons* employed. Let us,

1. Consider that which concerns the *times* of their promulgation, several of the other instances being regulated thereby.

With reference to the law it is said that God spake (*πάλαι*) *formerly*, or *of old*. Some space of time is denoted in this word, which had then received both its beginning and end. Take the word *absolutely*, and it comprises the whole space of time from the giving out of the first promise, to the end of the Old Testament revelations. Take it as relating to the Jews (which the apostle hath respect to) and the date is the giving of the law by Moses in the wilderness. So that this dispensation of God's "speaking in the Prophets," continued for the space of twenty one jubilees, or near eleven hundred years. After the death of the latter prophets, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, as the Jews freely confess, the Holy Spirit was taken from Israel. The fathers, therefore, *to whom* God spake in the Prophets, were all the faithful of the Jewish church from the giving of the law until the ceasing of prophecy.

§5. The revelation of the gospel is affirmed to be made (*ἐπ'εσχάλων των ἡμερων τουτων*) *in these last days*.

Most expositors suppose this phrase, "the last days," is a periphrasis of the times of the gospel. But it doth not appear that these are any where so called; nor where they ever known by that name among the Jews, upon whose principles the apostle proceeds. Some seasons, indeed, under the gospel, in reference to some churches, are called "the last days," but the whole time of the gospel, absolutely, is no where so termed. It is therefore, the last days of the Jewish church and state which were then drawing to their final abolition, that are here intended. The apostle takes it for granted, that the Jewish church state did yet continue; and proves that it was drawing to its period, chap. viii, ult. having its present standing in the forbearance of God. Again, the personal ministry of the Son of God, whilst

on earth, is here eminently, though not solely intended. For so the contrast runs—As God *of old* spake by the *prophets*, so in these *last days* he spake by his Son. His personal ministry was confined to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, Matt. xv, 24, to whom alone at first he sent his apostles, Matt. x, 5, 6, and is therefore said to be a “minister of the circumcision for the truth of God,” Rom. xv, 5. The words, Matt. xxi, 37, “*Last of all he sent unto them his Son*,” explain the apostle’s meaning. Thus Jacob also, Gen. xlix, 1, “I will tell you that which shall befall you (*ἐπ’ ἐσχάτων ἡμερῶν*, *Sept.*) “*in the last days*,” the words here used by the apostle. The days pointed out by Jacob are evidently those wherein the Messiah should come, before Judah was utterly deprived of sceptre and scribe. The sum is, that since the end of their church state was foretold to be a perpetual desolation, Dan. ix, 27, and the last days were now come upon them, they might understand what they were shortly to expect. The important end of the Jews being a people, a church, and kingdom, was to bring forth the Messiah, whose coming and work must of necessity put an end to their old state and condition.

§6. This makes it evident who were the persons spoken to in these last days. *To us*; that is, the members of the Jewish church, who lived in the days of our Lord’s personal ministry, and afterwards under the preaching of the gospel to that day, chap. ii, 3. The Jews of those times were very apt to think, that if they had lived in the days of the former prophets, and had heard them deliver their message from God, they would have received it with a cheerful obedience; their only unhappiness, as they thought, was, that they were “born out of due time,” as to the prophetic revelations, Matt. xxiii, 30. Now the apostle, aware

of this prejudice, informs them, that God, in the revelation of the gospel, had spoken to themselves what they so much desired. If then they attend not to this word, they must needs be self-condemned. Besides, that care and love which God manifested towards them, in speaking to them in this immediate manner, required the most indisputable obedience, especially considering how far this mode excelled what he had before used towards the fathers. This leads to

§7. 2. The next difference, which respects the *manner* of these several revelations of the will of God, and that in two particulars; for,

§1. The former was made (*πολυμερως*) by many and divers parts, one after the other, and consequently at "sundry times." The branch of the antithesis answering hereunto is not expressed, but is evidently implied to be (*επαξ* or *εφαπαξ*) at once. The expression intends the gradual discovery of the mind and will of God, by the additions of one thing after another at several seasons, as the church could bear the light of them, and as it was subservient to his main design of preserving all pre-eminence to the Messiah. How all this is argumentative to the apostle's purpose will instantly appear. Take the expression absolutely, to denote the whole progress of divine revelation from the beginning of the world, and it compriseth *four* principal parts or degrees, with those that were subservient to them. The *first* of these was made to *Adam*, which was the principle of faith and obedience to the antediluvian fathers; and to this were subservient all the consequent particular revelations before the flood. The *second* to Noah, after the flood, in the renewal of the covenant and establishment of the church in his family, Gen. viii, 21; ix, 9, 10; whereunto were subservient the revelations made to Melchisedech, Gen. xiv,

18, and others, before the calling of Abraham. The *third* to Abraham, with a peculiar restriction of the promise to his seed, and a fuller illustration of the nature of it, Gen. xii, 1—4; xv, 11, 12, and xvii, 1, 2, confirmed in the revelations made to Isaac, Gen. xxvi, 2, 4. Jacob, Gen. xlix, and others of their posterity. The *fourth* to Moses, in the giving of the law, and erection of the Jewish church in the wilderness; to which was principally subservient the revelation made to David, which was peculiarly designed to perfect the Old Testament worship, 1 Chron. xxiii, 25—28; xxviii, 2—9. To which we may add Solomon, with the rest of the prophets in their respective days; particularly those who before and during the captivity pleaded with the people about their defection by scandalous sins and false worship; and Ezra, with the prophets that assisted in the reformation of the church after its return from Babylon, who, in an eminent manner, excited the people to expect the coming of the Messiah.

§8. These were the principal parts and degrees of divine revelation from the foundation of the world to the coming of Christ, at least until his forerunner, John the Baptist. And this the apostle reminds the Hebrews of; that the will of God concerning his worship, was not formerly all at once revealed to his church by Moses or any other; but by several parts and degrees, by new additions of light, as in his infinite wisdom and care he saw meet: and hereby he clearly convinces them of their mistake in their obstinate adherence to the Mosaical institutions. It is as if he had said, Consider the way whereby God revealed his will to the church hitherto, hath it not been by parts and degrees? Hath he at any time shut up the progress of revelation? Hath he not always kept the church in



expectation of new discoveries of his will? Did he ever declare that he would add no more to what he had commanded, or make no alteration in what he had instituted? Therefore Moses, when he had finished all his work in the Lord's house, tells the church, God would raise up another prophet like unto him; that is, who should reveal new laws and institutions as he had done, whom they were to hear and obey, on the penalty of utter extermination, Deut. xviii, 13. In opposition to this gradual revelation, the apostle intimates that now, by Jesus the Messiah, the Lord hath, at once begun and finished the whole revelation of his will, according to their own hopes and expectations. So Jude 3, the faith was "once delivered to the saints;" not in one day, or by one person, but at one season, or under one dispensation, comprising all the time from the entrance of the Lord Jesus Christ upon his ministry, to the closing of the canon of scripture, which period was now at hand. This season being once past and finished, no new revelation is to be expected to the end of the world, nor any alteration in the worship of God.

§9. (2.) God spake in the prophets (*πολυτροπως*) *after divers sorts* and manners. Now this respects either the various ways of God revealing himself to the prophets by dreams, visions, inspirations, voices, and angels; or, the ways of his dealing with the fathers, through the ministry of the prophets, by promises, threats, special messages, prophecies, public sermons, and the like. The latter is principally intended, though the former be not excluded, it being that from whence this latter variety principally arose. In opposition to this, the apostle intimates that the revelation by Christ was accomplished (*μονειδως*) *in one*

*only way* and manner—by his preaching the everlasting gospel.

§10. (3.) The last difference in the comparison is, that of old, God spake (*εν τοις προφηταις*) *in the prophets*, but now (*εν τω υιω*) *in the Son*.\*

Now the prophets, in whom God spake of old, were all those who were divinely inspired, and sent to reveal the mind and will of God, whether by word of mouth or by writing. That which made any revelation to be prophecy, in that sense so as to be an infallible rule for the church, was not the means of its communication to the prophets, but that inspiration of the Holy Ghost which implanted in their minds, what God would have them utter. 2 Pet. i, 24, 28.

§11. Answerable to this speaking of God in the prophets, it is asserted, that in the gospel revelation God spake by or in his Son. This is the main hinge on which all the apostle's after arguments throughout the epistle turn; and this bears the stress of all his inferences. And, therefore, having mentioned it, he proceeds immediately to that description of him, which gives evidence to all he deduces from this consideration. That the Son of God did mostly appear to the fathers under the Old Testament, is acknowledged by the ancients, and evident in scripture: See Zech. ii, 8—11. The Divine mediator having, from the foundation of the world, undertaken the care and salvation of the church, he it was who immediately dealt with it in what concerned its instruction and edification. This, however, doth not hinder but that God the Father is the fountain of all Divine revelation. There is

\**Ev* here answers the Hebrew **ב**, Numb. xii. God spake **במשה** *in Moses*. The expression intimates the certainty of the revelation, and the presence of God with his word.

a considerable difference between the Son of God revealing the Father's will in his Divine person to the prophets, and the same Divine personage as incarnate, revealing it immediately to the church. Under the Old Testament he instructed the prophets, and gave them that Spirit on whose inspiration their infallibility depended, 1 Pet. i, 11; but now under the gospel, taking our nature as hypostatically united to himself, he becomes the immediate teacher, in the room of all the *internuncii*, or prophetic messengers, he had before employed, whether human or angelic, from the foundation of the world. We come now,

§12. (III.) To obviate the great Jewish prejudice against the gospel, to which end observe, that though the apostle mentions the prophets in general, yet it is Moses whom he principally intends. This is evident from the application of this argument which he urges, chap. iii, 3, where he expressly prefers the Lord Jesus before Moses by name, in this matter of ministring to the church. For, whereas the apostle manages this point with excellent wisdom, and considering the inveterate prejudices of the Hebrews in favor of Moses, he could not mention him in particular, until he had proved Jesus, whom he had preferred above him, to be so excellent and glorious, so far exalted above men and angels, that it was no disparagement to Moses to be esteemed inferior to him. Again, the great reason why the Jews adhered so pertinaciously to Mosaical institutions, was their persuasion of the unparalleled excellency of the revelation made to Moses. This they retreated to, and boasted of, when pressed with the doctrine and miracles of Christ, John ix, 28, 29. And this was the main foundation of all their contests with the apostles, Acts xvi, xxi, 21, 28. The law and all legal observances, according to them, were to be con-

tinued for ever, on account of the incomparable excellency of the revelation made to Moses. Not to follow them in their imaginations, the just privileges of Moses above all other prophets lay in these three things: (1.) That he was a lawgiver, or mediator, by whom God gave that law, and revealed that worship, in the observance of which the very beginning of the Jewish church consisted. (2.) That God, in revealing his will to him, dealt in a more familiar and clear manner, than with any other prophet. (3.) In that the revelation made to him, concerned the ordering of the whole house of God, when the other prophets were employed only about some particulars built upon this foundation. Herein consisted the just and free pre-eminence of Moses; but of no force, when urged against our Divine prophet and his gospel, if we consider the just statement of the gospel revelation by the Son, and particularly his qualifications as a prophet, the incomparable circumstances attending the revelation itself, the concessions of the Jews, and especially the glory and excellency of the revelation of the gospel.

§13. (1.) Let us attend to the just statement of the mind and will of God, revealed to us by the Son. To this end observe, (1.) That the Lord Jesus Christ, by virtue of the personal union, was furnished with all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge which the human nature was capable of, both as to principle and exercise. He possessed it by his union, and therefore immediately from the person of the Son, sanctifying by the Holy Ghost that nature which he took into subsistence with himself. But the revelation, by which God spake in him unto us, was ultimately from the Father, Rev. i, 1. So that,

(2.) The mission and furniture of the Son, as the incarnate mediator, for declaring the holy pleasure of God to the church, were peculiarly from the Father. He received command of the Father concerning the whole work of his mediation, John x, 18; and what he should speak, John xii, 4, according to that commandment he wrought and taught, John xiv, 31. Whence that is the common periphrasis whereby he expressed the person of the Father, he that sent him, as also he that sealed and anointed him. And his doctrine on that account, he testified, was not his originally as mediator, but his that sent him, John vii, 16. That blessed tongue of the learned whereby he spake the refreshing word of the gospel to poor weary sinners, was the gift of the Father.

(3.) As to the manner of his receiving the gospel revelation, a popular mistake must be discarded.

The Socinians, to avoid the force of these testimonies which are urged to confirm the deity of Christ, from the assertions in the gospel that he who spake to the disciples on earth was then also in heaven, have broached a Mahometan fancy, that the Lord Christ, before his entrance on his public ministry, was locally taken up into heaven, and there instructed in the ministry of the gospel which he was to reveal.

But this imaginary rapture is grounded solely on their (*πρωτον ψευδος*) *fundamental error*, that the Lord Christ, in his whole person, was no more than a mere man. There is no mention of any such thing in the scripture; where the Father's revealing his will to the Son is treated of, and the fanciful hypothesis is expressly contrary to the scripture: for the Holy Ghost affirms, that Christ entered once into the holy place, and that after he had obtained eternal redemption for us, Heb. ix, 12. But that should have been his second en-

trance, had he been taken thither before, in his human nature. As to the time of his ascension, which these men assign, namely, the forty days after his baptism, it is said expressly, that he was all that time in the wilderness among the wild beasts, Mark i, 13; so that this figment must have no place in our inquiry into the way of the Father speaking in the Son. Wherefore, to declare the nature of this revelation we must observe further,

(4.) That Jesus Christ, as he was the eternal word and wisdom of the Father, had an omniscieny of the whole nature and will of God, as the Father himself hath, their will and wisdom being the same. This is the blessed (*συνπεριχωρησις*) *mutual in-being* of each person, by virtue of their oneness in the same nature. Moreover,

(5.) The mystery of the gospel, the special counsel and covenant concerning the redemption of the elect in his blood, and the worship of God by his redeemed ones, transacted between the Father and the Son from all eternity, were known to him as the Son. Although the person of Christ, God and man, was our mediator, Acts xx, 8; 2 John i, 14, 18; yet his human nature was that wherein he discharged the duties of his office, and (*the principium quod*) the immediate or proximate source of all his mediatory actings, 1 Tim. ii, 5.

(6.) This human nature of Christ, in which he was made of a woman, made under the law, Gal. iv, 4; was from the instant of its union with the person of the Son of God, an holy thing, Luke i, 35; holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, and radically filled with all that perfection of habitual grace which was necessary to the discharge of that whole duty which, as man, he owed to God. But,

(7.) Besides this furniture with habitual grace for the performance of holy obedience as a man made under the law, he was peculiarly endowed with "the Spirit without measure," which he was to receive as the great prophet of the church; and this communication of the Spirit was the foundation of his sufficiency for the discharge of his prophetic office, Isaiah xi, 2, 3; xlviii, 16; lxi, 1—3; Dan. ix, 24. As to the reality and being of this gift, he received it from the womb; whence in his infancy he was said to be (*πληρουμενος σοφιας*) *filled with wisdom*, Luke ii, 40; wherewith, in a very early period, he confuted the doctors to their amazement, ver. 47. And with his years were these gifts increased in him; he went forwards in wisdom, and stature, and favor, ver. 52; but the full communication of this Spirit, with special reference to the discharge of his public office, and the visible pledge of it, he was made partaker of at his baptism, Matt. iii, 16. It remaineth, then, for us to shew, wherein still more especially his pre-eminence above all the ancient prophets did consist, so that the word spoken by him is principally and eminently to be attended to, which is the apostle's argument in this place. To which end observe, that,

§14. (2.) There were sundry excellencies and incomparable circumstances that attended the revelation itself made to Christ as a prophet. For,

(1.) Not receiving the Spirit by measure, John iii, 34; as all other prophets did, he had a perfect comprehension of the whole mind and will of God, as to the mystery of our salvation, and the duty he would require of his church. It pleased the Father that in him all fulness should dwell, Col. i, 19; a fulness of grace and truth, John i, 17; not a transient irradiation, but a permanent fulness; all treasures of wisdom

and knowledge being hid in him as their proper dwelling-place. Hence the reason why he did not at once reveal to his disciples the whole counsel of God, was not because all the treasures of it were not committed to him, but because they could bear no other than that gradual communication thereof, which he afforded them, John xvi, 12. He himself dwelt in the midst of those treasures, and, however unfathomable by others, he saw to the bottom of them.

(2.) The prophets receiving their revelation as it were by number and measure from the Holy Ghost, could not add one word of infallibility and authority to what they had so received; but Christ having all the treasures of wisdom, knowledge, and truth, lodged in himself, delivered his oracles, at all times, and in all places, with equal infallibility and authority, and what he spake derived its whole authority from him speaking it, and not from its consonancy to what was otherwise revealed.

(3.) The prophets of old were so barely instrumental in receiving and revealing the will of God, being only servants in the house for the good of others, that they saw not to the bottom of the things by themselves revealed; and therefore diligently read and studied the books of preceding prophets, Dan. ix, 2; and meditated upon their own predictions, to obtain an understanding in them, 1 Pet. i, 10—12. But the Lord Jesus, the Lord over his own house, had an absolute, perfect comprehension of all the mysteries he revealed.

(4.) The difference was no less between them in respect of the revelations themselves. For although the substance of the will and mind of God concerning salvation by the Messiah, was more or less made known to all the prophets, yet it was done so obscurely, that they came all short, in the light of that glorious mys-



tery, to John the Baptist, who yet was inferior, as to a clear and distinct apprehension of it, to the least of the two disciples of Christ, Matt. xi, 11; and the giving of the law by Moses to instruct the church in that mystery, by its types and shadows, is opposed to that grace and truth which were brought by Jesus Christ, John i, 17, 18.

§15. (3.) We must further observe, that the Jews with whom the apostle had to do, had an expectation of a signal and final revelation of the will of God to be made by the Messiah in the last days of their church and state, and not as they now fondly imagine, of the world. Hence it is laid down as a principle (*in Neve shalom*) "Messiah the king shall be exalted above Abraham, be high above Moses, yea, and the ministering angels." And it is for the excellency of the revelation made by him that he is thus exalted above Moses. Whence Maimonides himself acknowledgeth, (*Tractat. de regibus*) "That at the coming of the Messiah, hidden and deep things (*i. e.* of the counsel of God) shall be laid open to all." And this persuasion they built on a promise of a new covenant to be made with them, not like the covenant made with their fathers, Jeremiah xxxi, 32, 33. From all these observations we may evidently perceive, wherein the force of the apostle's present argument lies; which he rather insinuates from their own principles, than openly pressing them with its reason, which last mode he afterwards more conveniently adopts.

§16. (4.) Having declared the Son to be the immediate revealer of the gospel, he proceeds to assert his glory and excellency, both antecedent to his mediatorial office, and what he received upon his investiture therewith. Two things in the close of this verse are

assigned to him. That he was appointed heir of all; and by him the worlds were made.

§17. (1.) He was appointed (*κληρονομος*) *heir* of all. *Κληρος* is a *lot*, and a peculiar *portion* received by lot; thence it signifies an *inheritance*, which is a man's lot and portion. Strictly it is the same with *hæres*, an heir. And an heir generally is, "he who entereth into the right, place, and title of him that is deceased, as if he were the same person." But yet the name of an heir is not *restrained* in law to him who succeeds a *deceased* person, (in which sense it can have no place here,) but also comprehends a *possessor*, a trustee, and a legatary. Nor is the title and right given to the Son as mediator, the same with that of God absolutely considered. *This* is eternal, natural, co-existent with the being of all things; *that* is new, created by grant and donation; by whose erection and establishment, nevertheless, the other is not at all impeached. For whereas it is affirmed, that the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son, John v, 22, 27, 30; it respects not title and rule, but actual administration.

§18. As the term (*κληρος*) denotes any rightful possessor by grant from another, it is properly ascribed to the Son; and there are three things intended in this word:

(1.) *Title*, dominion, lordship; (*hæres est qui herus;*) "the heir is the lord of that which he is heir unto;" so the apostle, Gal. iv, 1, *the heir is lord of all*. And in this sense is Christ called the first-born, Psalm lxxxix, 27, "I will give him to be my first-born, higher than (or high above) the kings of the earth."

(2.) *Possession*. Christ is made actual possessor of that which he hath title to, by the surrender or grant of another. God, in respect of his dominion, is called the absolute possessor of heaven and earth, Gen. xiv

22. Christ, as a mediator, is a possessor by grant, and there was a suitableness, that he who was the Son should thus be heir. Whence Chrysostom and Theophylact affirm, that the words denote "the propriety of his sonship, and the immutability of his lordship." Not that he was then made heir of all, as he was (*μονογενης*) the only begotten Son of the Father, John i, 14; but it was meet that he who was eternally such, and had on that account an absolute dominion over all with his Father, should become the first-born among many brethren: should have a delegated heirship of all, and be appointed "head over all to the church," Ephes. i, 22.

(3.) That he hath both this title and possession by *grant* from the Father; by virtue of which grant he is made Lord by a new title, and hath possession given him accordingly.

§19. He is the Lord (*παντων*) of *all*. This is the object of Messiah's heirship; that his extensive inheritance. The word may be taken either in the masculine gender, and denote all persons; or in the neuter, denoting, absolutely, all things. And it is this latter sense that suits the apostle's argument, and adds a double force to his design. For,

1. The author of the gospel being heir and Lord of *all things* universally, the sovereign disposer of all those rites and ordinances of worship, about which the Jews contended, must needs be at his disposal, to change and alter them as he thought proper. And hence it was easy for them to conclude, that if they intended to be made partakers of any good in heaven or earth, in love and mercy, it must be by an interest in him; which yet without constant obedience to his gospel cannot be attained. 2. This sense is evinced from the words immediately following, "By whom also he made the worlds." Probably they render 'a reason

of the equitableness of this great trust reposed in the Son. He made all, and therefore it was meet he should be Lord of all. However, the force of the word is equal to the term (*ἀίῶνας*) *worlds*.

§20. Upon the creation of man, God gave him a dominion over all things in this lower world, Gen. i, 28, 29. He made him his heir, vicegerent, and substitute on earth. And as for the other creatures, to which his power and authority did not immediately extend, as the whole inanimate host of the superior world, they were ordered by him that made them to serve for his good. Gen. i, 14; Deut. iv, 19. But besides the lower part of his dominion, God had for his glory created angels in heaven above. These made up another branch of God's providential kingdom; the whole, notwithstanding, the upper and lower world, being independent of each other, and meeting in nothing but their subjection to God himself. When man fell from his delegated dominion, all things returned to an immediate, absolute dependence on the government of God. But as the fall of angels did not, in its own nature, prejudice mankind; no more did this fall of man the angels, that persisted in their obedience, they being no part of his inheritance. However, by the apostasy and punishment of those angels, that kept not their first station, it was manifested how possible it was that the remainder of them may sin after the similitude of their transgression. Things being brought into this condition; one branch of the kingdom of God, that which had been under the administration of man and allotted to his service, being cast out of that order wherein he had placed it, and the other in an apparent possibility of being so also; it seemed good to the Lord in his infinite wisdom, to erect one king-

dom out of these two disordered members of his first dominion, and to appoint one common heir Lord and ruler of them both. Ephes. i, 10, "He gathered together in one all things in Christ, both which are in the heavens, and which are in earth, even in him."

§21. (2.) The way whereby Christ the Son came to his inheritance is expressed by (εθηκε) *he hath appointed*. Which denotes, in this connexion, "The glorious investiture of the Lord Messiah in the full and actual possession of his kingdom after his resurrection, with the manifestation of it in his ascension, and the illustrious token of its stability in his sitting at the right hand of God." The grant was actually made to him upon his resurrection; Matt. xxviii, 18, and all was sealed and ratified when he took possession of his throne at the right hand of the Father; and in virtue hereof was he declared to be "both Lord and Christ," Acts ii, 36, v. 31. And such weight do the scriptures lay upon this glorious investiture of Christ in his inheritance, that they speak of his whole power as then first granted him; Rom. xiv, 9; Phil. ii, 7, 10. And the reason of it is, because he had then actually performed that stupendous work, on account of which his mediatorial power and authority were originally granted and eternally designed. And it is manifest that he who is the Lord and heir of all things, spiritual, temporal, and ecclesiastical, must needs have power over all Mosaical institutions as a part of his unrivalled jurisdiction. In short, God, in pursuit of the sovereign purpose of his will, hath granted the Son as incarnate, and mediator of the new covenant, according to the eternal counsel between them both, a sovereign power over all things both in heaven and earth, with the possession of an absolute proprietor, to dispose of

them at his pleasure, for the advancement of his proper and peculiar work, as head of his church.\*

§22. (3.) *By whom he made the worlds.* The apostle in these words corroborates his present argument, from another consideration of the person of the Messiah, wherein he also discovers the foundation of the pre-eminence before ascribed to him. By him the *worlds were made*; so that they were his own, John i, 11; and it was meet that, in the new condition which he underwent, he should be Lord of them all. Moreover, if all things were made by him, all disobedience to him is most unreasonable, and will be attended with inevitable ruin.

That which some men design in their wresting of this place, is to defeat the illustrious testimony herein given to the eternal deity of the Son of God, and to this purpose they proceed variously.†

\*The demirable digression “of the dominion or lordship of Christ,” stands, in this edition, as the concluding preliminary Exercitation.

† Some affirm that by ( $\delta\iota\ \tilde{\epsilon}$ ) *by whom*, ( $\delta\iota\ \text{ον}$ ) *for whom* is intended. According to this exposition of the words, we have in them an expression of the love of God towards the Messiah, in that for his sake he made the worlds; but not any thing of the excellency, power, and glory of the Messiah himself. But neither is it proved that in any other place these expressions are equipollent; nor, if that could be supposed, is there any reason offered why the one of them should in this place be put for the other. For the places usually referred to, do no way prove that ( $\delta\iota\ \tilde{\alpha}$ ) with a genitive, doth ever denote the final cause, but the efficient only. As to Rom. vi, 4, be it observed, the case is not the same where things, as where persons are spoken of:  $\epsilon$  here relates to a person, (whom) and yet is  $\delta\iota\ \tilde{\alpha}$  joined with it, asserted by the objectors, to denote the end of the things spoken of, which is insolent. Besides  $\delta\delta\tilde{\alpha}\ \text{πατρὸς}$ , in that place, is indeed the glorious power of the Father’s; the efficient of the resurrection of Christ treated of. So that, whereas  $\delta\iota\ \tilde{\alpha}$  is used, *six hundred* times with a genitive case in the New Testament, no one instance can be given, where it may be rendered proper, for, and therefore cannot be so here. But on supposition that some such instance might be produced, yet being contrary

§23. The Socinians generally lay no exception against the person making, whom they acknowledge to be the Son Messiah, but to the world said to be made. "These are not, say they, the things of the old, but of the new creation; not the fabric of heaven and earth, but the conversion of the souls of men; not the first institution and forming of all things, but the restoration of mankind, and their translation into a new condition of life." To this we reply,

1. The only new creation granted by such persons being nothing but a moral swasion of men's minds, by the outward doctrine of the gospel, I know not what allusion can be fancied in it to the creation of the world out of nothing.

2. The apostle speaks here of the same creation that John treats of in the beginning of his gospel; but that is the creation of the whole world, and all things contained in it, it must be granted, or we may well despair of ever understanding one line of the sacred oracles, or the common forms of speech.

The expression of "planting the heavens," and "laying the foundation of the earth," Isa. li, 17, are plainly allegorical, as appears from the circumstance of time when this is said to be done, which was at the coming of Israel out of Egypt; when the heavens and

to the constant use of the word, some cogent reason from the text wherein it is used, or the thing treated of, must be urged to give that sense admittance: and nothing of that nature can be here pleaded. Besides, as  $\delta\iota\ \tilde{\epsilon}$  and  $\epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \delta\upsilon$ , are distinguished, the one expressing the efficient, the other the final cause, Rom. xi, 36; so also are they in this very epistle, chap. ii, 10,  $\delta\iota\ \delta\upsilon\ \tau\acute{\alpha}\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\alpha$ ,  $\kappa\alpha\iota\ \delta\iota\ \tilde{\epsilon}\ \tau\acute{\alpha}\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\alpha$ . 'For whom are all things and by whom are all things:' and is it likely that the apostle would put one of them for the other, contrary to the proper use which he intended immediately to assign severally unto them? Again,  $\delta\iota\ \tilde{\epsilon}$ , by whom, here is the same with  $\delta\iota\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\tilde{\epsilon}$ , by him, John i, 3; which incontestably signifies the *efficient cause*.

the earth, properly so called, could not be made, planted, founded, or created. And is yet more evident from an adjoined exposition of the allegory; "I have put my words into thy mouth, and said unto Sion thou art my people."

§24. We may again consider the reasons that present themselves from the context, for the removal of the interpretation above suggested.

1. It sinks under its own weakness and absurdity. The apostle intending to set out the excellency of the Son of God, affirms that by him "the worlds were made;" that is, say they, Christ preaching the gospel converted souls to the faith, and many more were converted by the apostle's preaching the same doctrine, whence blessed times of light and salvation ensued. Who, not overpowered with prejudice, could once imagine any such meaning in these words? especially considering that it is as contrary to the design of the apostle, as it is to the import of the words themselves. This is what Peter calls, "men's wresting the scriptures to their own perdition."

2. The apostle writes didactically, expressing plainly the matter whereof he speaks, in words usual and proper. To what end then should he use so strained an allegory in a point of doctrines; yea, a fundamental argument of the religion he taught? Besides, the phrase "by whom he made the worlds," is no more in these men's apprehensions, than, "in him hath he spoken in these latter days." Nor is this mode of speaking any where used, not in the most allegorical prophecies of the Old Testament, to denote that which they would here wrest it to express. But "making of the world," signifies making the world, in the whole scripture throughout, and nothing else.



3. The making of the worlds here intended, was a thing *past* (εποίησέ) *he made* them, that is, he did so of old; and the same word is used by the septuagint to express the old creation. But now that which the Jews called the “world to come,” or the blessed state of the church under the Messiah, the apostle speaks of, as of that which was not yet come; the present worldly state of the Jewish church yet continuing.

4. The Greek words (αἰών and αἰῶνες) or the Hebrew words (עָרְמִים and צָרַם) which are so rendered, taken absolutely as they are here used, do never in any one place, in the Old or New Testament, signify the new creation, or state of the church under the gospel; but the whole world and all things therein contained, they do signify in this very epistle, chap. xi, 3.

5. Wherever the apostle in this epistle speaks of the church state under the Messiah, he never calls it by the single name (δικουμένη or αἰὼν) *world*, but still with the limitation of “*to come*,” as chap. ii, 5; chap. vi, 5. But where it is used absolutely as in this place, and chap. xi, 3, it is invariably the whole world that is intended.

6. The context is utterly abhorrent from this gloss. The Son in the preceding words, is said confessedly to be made heir or lord of all things absolutely and universally; and to that assertion he subjoins a reason of the equity of that transcendent grant made unto him, namely, because by him *all things were made*, whereunto he adds, his upholding, ruling, and disposing of them, “by the word of his power.” Thus the apostle having declared the honor of the Son as mediator, in that he was made “heir of all,” adds thereunto his excellency in himself from his eternal power and godhead; which he not only asserts, but evinces by an argument from the works of creation. And to avoid

all contracted thoughts of this work, he expresseth it in terms comprehending the whole creation as a stupendous fabric, having a permanent subsistence through successive ages; as John also contents not himself by affirming that he made all things, but adds to that assertion, that without him nothing was made that was made, John i, 3. We now proceed as proposed,

§25. (IV.) To make some doctrinal and practical observations on the words:

*Obs.* 1. The revelation of the will of God, as to all things concerning his worship, our faith and obedience, is peculiarly and eminently from the Father. This is that which the apostle partly asserts, partly takes for granted, as the spring of his future reasoning; and this shall now be a little further illustrated and confirmed. To which end we may particularly remark,

(1.) That the whole mystery of his will, antecedently to the revelation of it, is said to be "hid in God," that is, the Father, Ephes. iii, 9. It lay wrapt up from the eyes of men and angels, in his eternal wisdom and counsel, Col. i, 26, 27. The Son, indeed, who was from eternity in the bosom of the Father, John i, 18, as one brought up with him, his eternal delight and wisdom, Prov. viii, 29, 30, was partaker with him in this counsel, ver. 31, as also his eternal Spirit, who searches and knows all the deep things of God; 1 Cor. ii, 10, 11, but yet the rise and spring of this mystery was in the Father. For the order of acting in the blessed Trinity, follows the order of subsistence. As the Father, therefore, is the fountain of the Trinity, as to subsistence, so also as to operation.

(2.) That the revelation of the mystery of the will of God, so hidden in the counsel of his will from eternity, was always made in pursuit and for the accomplishment of the purpose of the Father; or, that eter-

nal purpose is by way of eminency, ascribed to him, Ephes. i, 8, 9, "He hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself." It is the Father of whom he speaks, ver. 3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Now he abounds to usward by wisdom and prudence, or abundantly manifests his infinite wisdom in his dealings with us, by the revelation of the mystery of his will; and this he doth in pursuit of his good pleasure which he purposed in himself; or that purpose of his will which had its foundation solely in his good pleasure.

(3.) This purpose of God the Father being communicated to the Son, whence resulted the counsel of peace between them both; Zech. vi, 13, and the Son rejoicing to do the work that was incumbent on him for its accomplishment; Prov. viii, 30—32, it became peculiarly the care and work of the Father, to see that the inheritance promised him upon his undertaking, should be given to him. This is done by the revelation of the will of God to men concerning their obedience and salvation whereby they are made the lot, the seed, the portion, and inheritance of Christ: to this end the Father, who said to the Son, "Sit thou on my right hand," Psalm cx, 2; sends the rod of his power out of Sion, ver. 2, to declare his rule even over his enemies, and to make those people given him willing and obedient, ver. 3. But the inheritance thus given by the Father to the Messiah being wholly in the possession of another, it became him to take it out of the usurper's hands, and deliver it up to him whose right it was; and this he doth by the revelation of his mind in the preaching of his word, Col. i, 12, 13. And from these considerations it is that,

(4.) The whole revelation and dispensation of the will of God in and by the word, is, as before observed, eminently appropriated to the Father. Eternal life (the purpose, the counsel, the means, and procurer of it) was with the Father, and was manifested to us by the Word of truth, 1 John i, 1, 2. And it is the Father, that is, his will, mind, grace, love, and purpose, that the Son declares, John i, 18, in which work he speaks nothing but what he heard and learned from the Father, John viii, 28. And thence he says, "The doctrine is not mine," (that is, principally and originally) "but his that sent me," John vii, 16. And the gospel is called the gospel of the glory of the "blessed God," which is a periphrasis of the person of the Father, who is the "Father of glory." And we might also remark that the great work of making this gospel effectual on the minds of men, doth peculiarly belong to the Father, which he accomplisheth by his Spirit, 2 Cor. iii, 18; iv, 6.

§26. And from the appropriating of this work originally and principally to the Father, there are three things that are particularly intimated unto us:

1. The authority that is to be considered in it: the Father is the original of all power and authority; of him the whole family of heaven and earth is named, Eph. iii, 15. He is the Father of the whole family, from whom Christ himself receives all his power and authority as mediator, Matt. xxviii, 18; which, when his work is accomplished, he shall give up again into his hand, 1 Cor. xv, 28. He sent him into the world, set him over his house, gave him command and commission for his work. The very name and title of "Father" carries authority along with it; Mal. i, 6; he hath all power essentially in him over the souls and eternal conditions of them to whom he speaks. And

what holy reverence, humility, and universal subjection of soul to the word doth this require? In this representation,

2. There is also love. In the economy of the blessed Trinity, about the work of our salvation, that which is eminently and in an especial manner ascribed to the Father is love, 1 John iv, 9, 10, 16. "God," that is, the Father, "is love." To be love, full of love, to be the special spring of all fruits of love, is peculiar to him as the Father. It is out of love, infinite love, mercy, and compassion, that God would at all reveal his mind and will to sinners. He might for ever have locked up the treasures of his wisdom and prudence, wherein he abounds towards us in his word, in his own eternal breast. He might have left all the sons of men to that woful darkness, whereunto by sin they had cast themselves, and kept them under the chains and power of it, with the angels that sinned before them, unto the judgment of the great day. But it was from infinite love that he made this condescension to reveal himself and his will unto us. This mixture of authority and love, which is the spring of the revelation of the will of God to us, requires all readiness, willingness, and cheerfulness in our reception of it. Besides these,

3. There is also care peculiarly discoverable in it. The great care of the church is eminently in the Father. He is the husbandman that takes care of the vine and vineyard, John xv, 1, 2. And thence our Savior, who had a delegated care of his people, commends them to the Father, John xvii; as to whom the care of them did principally and originally belong. Care is proper to a father as such, and especially to God as a Father. Care is inseparable from paternal love.

§27. As for the dispensers of the word, let them take heed of pursuing that work negligently, which hath its spring in the authority, love, and care of God, see 1 Tim. iv, 13—16. Let them know to whom to look for support, ability, and encouragement in their work, Ephes. vi, 19, 20. And let them not be discouraged whatever opposition they meet with in the discharge of their duty, considering whose work they have in hand, 2 Cor. iv, 15, 16. Let them learn how they ought to dispense the word so as to answer the spring from whence it comes; namely, with authority, love to, and care for the souls of men. And, let them consider to whom they are to give an account of the work they are called to discharge, and the talents with which they are entrusted, Heb. xiii, 7.

§28. And for them to whom the word is preached, let them consider,

With what reverence and godly fear they ought to attend to the dispensing of it, seeing it is a proper effect and issue of the authority of God, Heb. xii, 25. How they will escape if they neglect so great a salvation declared to them from the love and care of God, Heb. ii, 3. And, with what holiness and spiritual subjection of soul to God they ought to be conversant with all his appointed ordinances of worship, Heb. xii, 28, 29.

§29. *Obs.* 2. The authority of God speaking by the inspired penmen, is the sole foundation of our assenting to the scriptures, and what they contain, with Divine faith. He once spake in them, he still continues to speak by them, and therefore is their word to be received, 2 Pet. iii, 21, 22.

§30. *Obs.* 3. "God's gradual revelation of his mind and will to the church, was a fruit of infinite wisdom and care towards his elect." "These are parts of his

ways, says Job, but how little a portion is heard of him?" Job xxvi, 14. Though all his ways and dispensations are ordered in infinite wisdom, yet we can but stand at the verge of the ocean, and admire its glory and greatness. Little it is that we can comprehend; yet what may be instructive to further our faith and obedience is not hidden from us. And the following things are evident in this matter:

(1.) That he did not overfill their vessels; he administered light as they were able to bear it: though we know not perfectly what their condition was, yet this we know, that as they needed no more light than they had in their respective generations for the discharge of the duty God required of them; so more light would have unfitted them for somewhat or other, that was their incumbent duty.

(2.) He kept them continually dependent upon himself, waiting for their rule and direction from his sovereign pleasure, which, as it tended to his glory, so it was exceedingly suited to their safety to keep them in an humble, waiting frame.

(3.) He so gave out the light and knowledge of himself, as that the great work which he had so accomplished, which lay in the stores of his infinitely wise will, might not be impeded. He gave light enough to believers to enable them to receive the Redeemer, and not so much, as to hinder obdurate sinners from crucifying him.

(4.) He did this work so, that the pre-eminence of a full and ultimate revelation might be reserved for him, in whom all things were to be "gathered unto an head." And

(5.) There was tender care joined to this infinite wisdom. None of his elect in any age were left without that instruction which was needful for them in

their respective circumstances and generations: and this was so dispensed to them, as that they might have fresh consolation and support as their occasions required. Whilst the church of old was under this dispensation, they were still hearkening in hopes to hear new tidings from heaven for their teaching and refreshment. And if any difficulty befel them, they were sure not to want relief in this kind; which appears to have been a procedure equally proper and necessary, before the final hand was set to the work.

And this discovers the woful state of the present Jews. They maintain that Divine revelation is not perfected; and yet, notwithstanding all their miseries, darkness, and distresses, they dare not pretend that they have heard one word from heaven these two thousand years! that is, from the days of Malachi; but (awful state!) they still labor to keep the veil upon their eyes.

§31. *Obs.* 4. "We may see hence the absolute perfection of the revelation made by Christ and his apostles, as to every end and purpose whatever, for which God ever did or ever will reveal himself to mortals." For as this was the last way and means that God ever designed for that interesting purpose, so the person by whom he accomplished this work makes it indispensably necessary, that it be also absolutely perfect; from which nothing can be taken, and to which nothing must be added, under the penalty of that extermination threatened to all that will not attend to the voice of that prophet.

§32. *Obs.* 5. "The Lord Jesus Christ who is the great prophet of his church under the New Testament, the only revealer of the will of the Father, as the Son and wisdom of God, made the worlds and all things contained in them." And herein we have,



An illustrious testimony given to the eternal Godhead and power of the Son of God, for "he who made all things is God," as the apostle elsewhere affirms; and, to the equity of his being made heir, lord, and judge of all. No creature can decline the authority, or wave the tribunal of him that made them all. And a firm basis for faith, hope, patience, and contentment is administered to the saints in all dispensations. He who is their Redeemer, he who bought them with his blood, hath all that interest in all the things wherein they are concerned, that the sovereign right of creation can afford him; besides that grant which is made to him for this very end, that they may be disposed of for his own glory to their advantage, Isaiah iv, 4, 5. From this order of things, that Christ as the eternal Son of God, having made the worlds, hath them and all things in them put under his power as mediator and head of the church; we may see in what subserviency to the interest of the saints of the Most High, the whole creation is placed. And, hence we learn the way of obtaining a sanctified interest in, and a right use of all created things; namely, not to receive them merely on the general account as made by the Son of God, but on the more special account of their being granted him as mediator of the church.

§33. *Obs. 6.* "From the apostle's design in this whole discourse we may farther learn, that God in infinite wisdom ordered all things in the first creation, so as that the whole might be subservient to the glory of his grace in the new creation by Jesus Christ." By the Son he made the world in the beginning of time, that in the fulness of time he might be the just heir and Lord of all. The Jews have a saying, that, "the world was made for the Messiah;" which is thus far true, that all things were originally made and ordered, so that God

might be everlastingly glorified in the work which the Messiah was to accomplish. Hence the apostle John, in the beginning of his gospel, brings both the creations together; the first by the eternal word, absolutely; the other by him as incarnate, that the suitableness and correspondency of all things in them might be evident. All things at first were made by him; that when they were lost, ruined, scattered, they might again, in the appointed season, be "gathered together into one head" in him. The apostle declares not only that all things were made by him, but also for him; so made for him, that he might be the head of the body of the church, that is, that he might be the supreme head and original fountain of the new creation, as he had been of the old. And the end and design of God in the whole of this mysterious plan, was, that the Son might have the pre-eminence in all things.

§34. It is not for us to inquire much into the particular reason of this economy; for "who can by searching find out God, who can find out the Almighty unto perfection?" Job xi, 7. It may suffice us, that he disposeth of all things "according to the counsel of his own will," Ephes. i, 12. This, antecedently to the consideration of its effects, we cannot, we may not search into, Deut. xxix, 29. The effects and consequences of his infinitely holy and wise counsel, wherein his glory shines forth to his creatures, we may consider and contemplate, and rejoice in the light that they will afford us into the treasures of these counsels themselves. Now herein we see,

1. That it was the eternal design of God, the whole creation should be put in subjection to the Word incarnate. "God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven,

and things in the earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father," Phil. ii, 9—11. God hath put all things whatever in subjection to him, see 1 Cor. xv, 24; Heb. ii, 8; Rom. xiv, 11. Hence John saw every creature which is in heaven and earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, ascribing "blessing and glory and honor, and power unto the Lamb for ever and ever," Rev. v, 13; that is, avowing their duty and subjection to him. Again,

§35. 2. God designed from eternity that his great and everlasting glory should arise from the new creation and the work thereof. Herein hath he ordered all things, "to the praise of the glory of his grace," Ephes. i, 6. It is true the works of the old creation did set forth the glory of God, Psalm xix, 1; they manifested his eternal power and godhead, Rom. i, 20; but God had not resolved, ultimately, to commit the manifestation of his glory to those works, though very glorious; and therefore did he suffer sin to enter into the world, which utterly stained the beauty of it, and brought it wholly under the curse. But he never suffered any spot or stain to come upon the work of the new creation, Ephes. v, 6; nothing that might in the least defeat, eclipse, or impair the glory that he intended should accrue to himself thereby. God hath so ultimately laid up his glory in the new creation, as that he will not lose any thing of that, which also is due to him from the old: but neither will he receive it from thence, but as it is transferred into a subserviency to the work of the new. Now God ordered all things so, as that this might be effected without force, coercion, or wresting of the creation besides its own order. And is there any thing more natural and proper, than that

the world should come into subjection to him by whom it was made? And this I take to be the meaning of what the apostle says about the bondage and liberty of the creature, which we have, Rom. viii, 19—22. He tells us, that the creature itself had a desire after the manifestation of the Sons of God, or the bringing forth of the kingdom of Christ in glory and power, and gives this reason for it, because it is brought into a condition of vanity, corruption, and bondage; wherein it did, as it were, unwillingly abide, and groaned to be delivered from it. That is, by the entrance of sin, the creation was brought into that condition wherein it could not answer its primitive end, to declare the glory of God, that he might be worshipped and honored as God; but was left, especially the earth and its inhabitants, to be a stage on which men act their enmity against God, and a means for the fulfilling their filthy lusts. This state being preternatural, occasional, and forced, the creation is said to dislike it, to groan under it, to hope for deliverance; doing that according to its nature, which it would do voluntarily, were it endowed with a rational understanding. But, saith the apostle, there is a better condition for this creation, after which, whilst it was afar off, it “put out its head,” as if in anxious expectation. What is this better state? Why the “glorious liberty of the Sons of God,” the new state and condition that all things are restored to for the glory of God by Jesus Christ. The creation hath as it were a natural propensity, yea, a longing to come into a subjection to Christ, as that which retrieves and frees it from the vanity, bondage, and corruption into which it was cast, when put out of its first order by sin. And this ariseth from that plot and design which God first laid in the creation of all things; that they being made by the Son, should naturally and

willingly, as it were, give up themselves in obedience to him, when he should take the rule of them upon the new account of his mediation. Moreover,

§36. God would hereby instruct us in the use and improvement we are to make of his creatures to his glory; for it is his will, that we should not use any thing as merely made by him, seeing, as they are now in fact so left, they are under the curse, and therefore are impure and unclean to them that use them, Tit. i, 15; but he would have us look upon them and receive them as they are given over to Christ. For the apostle in his application of the eighth Psalm to the Lord Messiah, chap. ii, 6—8, manifests that even the beasts of the field on which we live, are transferred in a peculiar manner to his dominion: and he lays our interest in them as to a clear, profitable, and sanctified use, in the new state of things brought in by Christ, 1 Tim. iv, 4, 5, “Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.” The whole mystery of laying the works of the old creation in a subserviency to the new being hid from many ages and generations, even from the foundation of the world, men, by the effects which they saw, concluded, that there was an eternal power and infinite wisdom whereby they were produced. But when any shall by faith perceive and consider, that the production of all things is originally beholden to the Son of God; that the world was made to this very end and purpose, that, he being afterwards incarnate for our redemption, they might all be put in subjection to him; they cannot but be ravished with admiration of the power, wisdom, goodness, and love of God, in this holy, wise, beautiful disposition of all his works and ways!

The most reasonable and intelligible way of considering the order of God's decrees, is that which refers them to the two general heads which all rational agents respect in their purposes and operations; namely, those of the last end, and the means conducing thereunto. Now the utmost end of God, in all his ways towards the sons of men, being the manifestation of his own glory, by way of mercy and justice, whatever tendeth thereunto, is also jointly to be looked upon as one entire means tending to that end. The works therefore of the old and new creation being of this sort, one joint and general mean for compassing the afore-mentioned end, nothing can hinder but that they may have that respect to each other which we have before declared.

VERSE 3.

*Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.*

§1. The subject proposed. §2. (I.) A description of Christ as to what he is in himself. And, 1. To what of Christ this description belongs. §3, 4. 2. The particular meaning of the expressions. §5, 6. (II.) What Christ doth and has done, And, 1. He upholds and rules all things by the word of his power §7. 2. He hath by himself purged our sins. §8, 9. (III.) What he enjoyeth as the consequence of both. §10—18. (IV.) Observations.

§1. **T**HE apostle proceeds in the description of the person in whom God spake in the gospel revelation, ascending to such a manifestation of him, as that they might understand his eminency above all formerly employed in similar ministration; as also how he was pointed out by sundry types and figures under the Old Testament. Of this description there are three parts; the first declaring what he is; the second, what he doth or did; and the third, as the consequent of both, what he enjoyeth.

§2. (I.) We begin with the description given us of Christ as to what he is in himself. And here a double

difficulty presents itself; to what of Christ this description belongs; and what is the particular meaning of the expressions.

1. To what nature, or what of Christ this description belongs. I shall not examine in particular the reasons that are alleged for several interpretations; but only propose and confirm that sense of the place which on full and due consideration appears agreeable to the analogy of faith, as expressly answering the apostle's design. To this end the following positions are to be observed:

(1.) It is not the direct and immediate design of the apostle to treat absolutely of either nature of Christ, his Divine or human; but only of his person. Hence though some of the things mentioned may belong to or be the properties of his Divine nature and some of his human, yet neither of them is spoken of as such, but are all considered as belonging to his person, of which he treats professedly.

(2.) That which the apostle principally intends with respect to the person of Christ, is to set forth his dignity, pre-eminence, and exaltation above all; and that not only consequentially to his discharge of the office of mediator, but also antecedently, in his worth, ability, and suitableness to undertake and discharge it, which in a great measure depended on his Divine nature.

(3.) As none of these expressions, especially in their present connexion, are used concerning any other but Christ alone; so they plainly express things that are more sublime and glorious, than can by scripture rules or the analogy of faith, be ascribed to any mere creature however exalted. Unto God asking that question, "Whom will ye compare to me, and whom will you liken unto me?" We cannot answer of any who is

not God by nature, that he is "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person."

(4.) Though the design of the apostle in general be to shew how the Father declared himself to us in the Son; yet this could not be done without manifesting what the Son is in himself, and in reference to the Father. The words express him such an one, as in whom the infinite perfections and excellencies of God are revealed to us.

(5.) There is nothing in these words that is not applicable to the Divine nature of Christ. He is in his person distinct from the Father, another, not the Father; but yet the same in nature and all glorious properties and excellencies. This oneness in nature, and distinction in person, may be well shadowed out by these expressions, he is "the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person." The bold curiosity of the schoolmen and some others, in expressing the manner of the generation of the Son by similitudes, is intolerable. Nor are the rigid impositions of those words and terms, which they or others have invented to express this profound mystery, of any better nature. Yet I confess, that supposing with some, the apostle intends by "the brightness of glory," to set forth to us the relation of the Son to the Father, by an allusion to the sun and its beams; some relief may thence be derived to our weak understandings, in the contemplation of this mystery; provided we observe that one known rule whose use Chrysostom urgeth in this place, namely, "That in the use of such allusions, every thing of imperfection is to be removed in their application to God." To say that there is only an allusion in the words, and that the Son is not properly, but by a metaphor, "the brightness of glory," is to teach the apostle to express himself in the things of God. For



my part, I understand as much of the nature, glory, and properties of the Son by this expression, "He is the brightness of glory," as I do by any of the most accurate expressions which have been arbitrarily invented to signify the same thing. This, and this alone, is clearly intended by them: that he is one distinct from God the Father, related unto him, and partaker of his glory.

(6.) These things being promised, we may discern the general import of the expressions. The words themselves being no where else used in scripture, we may receive some light from those in other places which are nearest allied to them. Such are these and the like: "We have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son of God," John i, 14; "He is the image of the invisible God," Col. i, 15; "The glory of God shines forth in him," 2 Cor. iv, 6. Now in these and the like places, the glory of the Divine nature is so intimated, as that we are directed to look to the glory of the absolutely invisible and incomprehensible God, in him incarnate. And this is the apostle's general meaning; the Son, in whom God speaks to us in the revelation of the gospel, doth in his own person so every way answer the excellencies and perfections of God the Father, that he is in him expressly represented to our faith and contemplation.

§3. 2. It remains then, that we consider the expressions severally, with the reasons why the apostle thus expresses the Divine glory of Jesus Christ.

(Ὁς ὡν ἀπαυγασμα τῆς δόξης) "Who being the brightness," light, lustre, majesty "of glory." The apostle, in my judgment, (which is humbly submitted to consideration) alludes to something that the people were instructed by, typically, under the Old Testament, with respect to this great mystery, the manifestation of the glory of God to them by the Son, the

second person in the Trinity. The ark, which was the most signal representation of the presence of God amongst them, was called "his glory." So the wife of Phineas, upon the taking of the ark, affirmed, that the glory was departed, 1 Sam. iv, 22, "The glory is departed from Israel, for the ark of God is taken." And the psalmist, mentioning the same thing, calls it "his glory" absolutely; Psalm lxxviii, 61, "He gave his glory into the hand of his enemies," that is, the ark. Now, on the filling of the tabernacle with the signs of God's presence in cloud and fire, the Jews affirm, that there was a constant (*απαυγασμα*, אֲפָאָרָה) or *majestic, shining glory* resting on the ark; which was the (*απαυγασμα της δοξης*) *the splendor of the glory* of God in that typical representation of his presence; and this was to instruct them in the way and manner whereby God would dwell amongst them. The apostle, therefore, calling them from the types, by which they had been obscurely instructed in these mysteries, to the things themselves represented, acquaints them with what that typical glory and splendor signified; namely, the eternal glory of God, with the essential beaming and brightness of it in the Son, in and by whom the glory of the Father shineth forth to us.

§4. The apostle adds, that he is (*χαρακτηρ ὑποστασεως εἰς*) "the express figure or image of his person;" that is, of the person of God the Father. Hence observe, that,

The hypostasis of the Father, is the Father himself. Of him is the Son said to be the express image. As is the Father, so is the Son. And this agreement and likeness between the Father and the Son is essential; not accidental, as those things are between relations finite and corporeal. What the Father is, doth, hath; that the Son is, doth, hath; or else the Father, as the

Father, could not be fully satisfied in him, nor represented by him.

By character two things seem to be intended, *First*, that the Son *in himself* is (εν μορφῇ Θεοῦ) “in the likeness of God,” Phil. ii, 6. *Secondly*, that unto us he is (εικὼν Θεοῦ) “the image of God,” representing him to us, Col. i, 6. For these words (μορφῇ, εἰκὼν, χαρακτῆρ) are used of the Lord Christ with respect to God the Father; and they seem to be thus distinguished by their use: (εν μορφῇ Θεοῦ ὑπαρχῶν) *being or subsisting in the form of God*, implies that he is essentially so; for there is no (μορφῇ) or *form* in the Deity, but what is essential. This he was absolutely, antecedently to his incarnation; the whole nature of God being in him, and consequently was in the *form of God*. In the manifestation of God to us, he is said to be (εικὼν τῆς Θεοῦ ἀοράτου, Col. i, 6) “the image of the invisible God,” because in him, as partaker of the nature of the Father, do the power, goodness, holiness, grace, and all other glorious properties of God shine forth, 2 Cor. iv, 6; and both these seem to be comprised in this word (χαρακτῆρ) *express image*, both that the whole nature of God is in him, as also that by him God is declared and expressed to us. The ordinary engraving of rings, or seals, or stones, is generally thought to be alluded to. It may be also that the apostle had respect to some representation of the glory of God by engraving amongst the institutions of Moses. Now there was scarcely anything of old that more gloriously represented God, than that of engraving his name on a plate of gold, to be worn on the front of the mitre of the high-priest, Exod. xxviii, 36, “Thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engraving of a signet, (קֹדֶשׁ לַיהוָה) “Holiness to Jehovah.” Here was that

name of God, which denotes his essence and being, characterized, and engraven to represent his holiness and glory to the people. And thus also when God promiseth to bring forth the Son, as the corner stone of the church, he promiseth "to engrave upon him the seven eyes of the Lord," Zech. iii, 9; or the perfection of his wisdom and power to be expressed unto the church in him. There having been, then, this representation of the presence of God, by the character, or engraving of his glorious name upon the plate of gold which the high priest was to wear that he may bear iniquities, the apostle lets the Hebrews know, that in Christ the Son is the real accomplishment of what was typified thereby.

§5. (II.) After the description of the person of Christ, the apostle returns to shew what he doth or did, and begins with asserting his power. He shewed before, that by him the worlds were created: he adds,

1. That he continues to uphold, or to rule and dispose of all things which he so made. For the explication of these words, two things are to be considered; First, In what sense Christ is said to uphold all things; and, Secondly, How he doth it by the word of his power.

1. How Christ is said to uphold all things. The term ( $\Phiερων$ ) *upholding*, is taken by expositors in a double sense, and accordingly is variously rendered. Some render it by *upholding, supporting, bearing, carrying*. And this, saith Chrysostom on the place, is "a greater work than that of the creation"

By the former all things were brought forth from nothing, by the latter are they preserved from that return to nothing, which their own nature, not capable of existence without dependence on their first cause,

would precipitate them into. Others take the word to express his *ruling, governing, and disposing* of all things which he made; and so it may denote, either the putting forth that power over all things which is given to the Son as Mediator; or else that providential rule over all, which he hath with his Father; which seems rather to be intended, because of the way expressed whereby he exerciseth this rule, “by the word of his power.” But I see no reason why we should suppose an inconsistency in these senses, and not rather conclude that they are both implied. For, as absolutely, it is the same Divine power and providence which is exercised in upholding, as in disposing of all things; so also rule and government is a matter of weight and burden, Isa. ix, 6, “The government shall be on his shoulder.” Among men this is done with much labor and travail; but he doth it with inexpressible facility “by the word of his power.” And to take the expression in its most comprehensive sense, is most safe.

§6. 2. Our next inquiry is after the *manner* whereby the Son upholdeth and disposeth of all things (*τῶ ῥήματι τῆς δυναμews*) “by the word of his power.” (*Ῥῆμα*) *word*, in the New Testament, is used in the same latitude and extent with (*דבר*) *dabar* in the Old. That which in this place is denoted by it, with its adjunct (*τῆς δυναμews*) *of power*, is the Divine power executing the counsels of the will and wisdom of God; or, the efficacy of God’s providence, whereby he worketh and effecteth all things according to the counsel of his will. Now the efficacy of Divine providence is called “the word of God;” to intimate, that as rulers accomplish their will by a word of command, about things subject to their pleasure, Matt. viii, 9, so doth God accomplish his whole mind and will in all things by his pow-

er. And therefore of his power, is here added by way of distinction, to shew what word it is that the apostle intends. It is not (*λογος εσιωδης*) *the essential word* of God, who is the person spoken of, nor (*λογος προφορικος*) *the word spoken* by him in the revelation of himself; but a word that is effectual and operative; the putting forth of his Divine power accomplishing with ease and authority his will and purpose in all things. This, in the vision of Ezekiel, is the communication of a spirit of life to the cherubs and wheels, to act and to move them as seems good to him, by whom they are guided. And this expression of upholding or supporting of all things by the word of his power, doth fully declare the glorious providence emblematically expressed in that vision. The Son being over all things made by himself, as on a throne over the cherubims and wheels, influenceth the whole creation with his power, communicating unto it respectively subsistence, life, and motion, acting, ruling, and disposing of all according to the counsel of his own will. And hence will follow his power and authority to change the Mosaical institutions, as also his truth and faithfulness in revealing the will of God.

§7. 2. He hath by himself purged our sins. Two things are here included: What he did, purged our sins; and how he did it, by himself. And what he supposeth as the foundation of both these is, that he was the great high priest of the church, they with whom he dealt knowing full well that this matter of purging sins belonged only unto the priest.

When he had purged our sins. The Greek word (*καθαριζω*) most frequently denotes *real, actual purification*, either of outward defilements, by healing and

cleansing, or spiritual defilements of sin, by sanctifying grace. But it is also frequently used in the same sense with (*καθαίρω*, and *καθαίρωμι*) to *purge by expiation* or *atonement*, Heb. ix, 22, 23. But (*καθαρισμον ποιῆσαι*) to *make a purgation* or *purification* of our sins, cannot here be taken for real and inherent sanctification; because it is spoken of as a thing already past and perfected: having purged our sins. He did it by himself alone, without the use or application of any other medium; but real inherent sanctification is with “washing of water by the Word,” Ephes. v, 26; or by “regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost,” Titus iii, 5. That is assigned to the death of Christ really and effectually which was done typically of old in the legal sacrifices by the priests; as is evident from the antithesis couched in that expression “by himself.” The word (*καθαρισμος*) then imports such a purgation as is made by expiation and atonement. And therefore is he said “to purge our sins,” and not “to purge us from our sins.” And wherever sins, not sinners, are made the object of any mediatory act of Christ, that act immediately respecteth God and not the sinner, and intends the removal of sin, so as that it should not be imputed.

And this the apostle farther declares by manifesting the way whereby he did it, (*δι' ἑαυτοῦ*) *by himself*; by the sacrifice and offering of himself. The high priest of old made atonement, and typically purged the sins of the people, by sacrificing of beasts according to the appointment of the law; but Levit. xvi, this high priest by the sacrifice of himself, by his blood-shedding and death on the cross, with his antecedent preparatory sufferings. He himself was both priest, sacrifice, altar, and incense, and he perfected his whole sacri-

fice at once, making an atonement for our sins, that to believers they should not be imputed.

§8. (III.) The apostle having thus asserted in general the sacerdotal office of Christ, and the effectual sacrifice he offered, and because that could not be done without the greatest humiliation and abasement of the Son, he instantly removes our gloomy apprehensions, by adding the blessed event of his all-important undertaking. "He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." The Lord Messiah undertaking to purge our sins, did by the one offering of himself perfectly effect it, which the blessed issue of his undertaking demonstrates; for he immediately entered into the glorious condition here expressed, as a signal pledge and evidence not only that his work was perfected, but also that God was fully satisfied and well pleased with what he had done.

The right hand, in scripture language, constantly denotes dignity and pre-eminence. The instance of Jacob's blessing Joseph's children testifies also the constant usage of those ancient times from the intimation of nature itself, Gen. xlvi, 17, 19; and the disposal of the sheep and goats at the last day, to the right hand and left, gives the privilege to the former. So Basil, "The right hand place denoteth a quality of dignity." And Chrysostom, "If he would have signified any diminution, he would not have said, sit on my right hand, but on my left." Solomon placed his mother, when she came unto him, on his right hand, as a token of honor; while he himself sat down on the throne of the kingdom; 1 Kings ii, 19; and the church is said to be at the right hand of Christ, Psalm xlv, 9. It is not unlikely but there may be an allusion in this expression to the Sanhedrim, the highest court of judicature among the Jews. He who presided in it was



called, the Father of judgment, or Father of the house of judgment; who sat next to, and at the right hand of the prince of the Sanhedrim, to whom belonged the execution of the sentence of the court. Agreeable to that are these words, "the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son." The greatest honor that can be done to any one among the sons of men, is for the chief ruler to set him next himself on his right hand: so is the Son of God as mediator, made partaker of the greatest glory that God hath to bestow in heaven. Nor is the "right hand of God" here taken absolutely for the power and strength of God; but, with the adjunct of sitting at it, it represents a place and eminency of glory, as he is considered on his throne of majesty: and therefore it is here termed the right hand of majesty, and not of power.

§9. Two things are particularly intended in this expression:

1. The security of Christ from all his adversaries and sufferings for the future. Now he is, in person, everlastingly free from all opposition; for where he is, thither his adversaries cannot come. He is above their reach, beyond their power, secure in the throne and presence of God. Thus the fruit of the church being delivered from the rage and persecution of Satan, is said to be caught up unto God, and to his throne, Rev. xii, 5. Hence though men do, and will continue their malice and wrath against the Lord Christ to the end of the world, as if they would crucify him afresh, yet "he dies no more," being triumphantly secure at the right hand of God.

2. His inexpressible majesty and glory. God on his throne, is God in the full manifestation of his own glorious majesty. On his right hand sits the Mediator; yet so, as that he also is "in the midst of the throne,"

Rev. v, 6. How little can our weak understandings comprehend of his majesty! It is not his rule and authority, but his safety, majesty, and glory which accompany them, that are here intended, as represented by the magnificent throne of Solomon. Besides, the apostle is not treating of the kingly power of Christ, but of his sacerdotal office; and the glory that ensued upon the discharge thereof. That, therefore, which he seems to respect, was the high priest's entrance into the holy place, after his offering of the solemn anniversary sacrifice of expiation. Then alone was he admitted into that august and holy place, that heaven below; where was the solemn representation of the presence, the throne, and glory of God. And what did he there? He stood with all humility and holy reverence ministering before the Lord, whose presence was there represented. He did not go and sit down between the cherubims, but worshipping at the footstool of the Lord, he departed. It is not, saith the apostle, so with Christ; but as his sacrifice was infinitely more excellent and effectual than theirs, so upon the offering of it he entered into heaven itself above, and into the real glorious presence of God; not to minister in humility, but to participate of the throne of majesty and glory. He is a "king and priest upon his throne," Zech. vi, 13.

§10. (IV.) We now proceed to the following observations:

*Obs.* 1. All the glorious perfections of the Deity belong to, and dwell in the person of the Son. Were it not so, he could not gloriously represent to us the person of the Father. This the apostle here teacheth us, as we have manifested in the explication of the words; and the same truth will again occur to us.

§11. *Obs.* 2. The whole manifestation of the nature of God unto us, and all communications of grace, are immediately through the person of the Son. There are sundry signal instances wherein God reveals himself, and communicates from his own infinite fulness to his creatures; and in all of them he doth it immediately by the Son.

(1.) In the creation of all things, God both gave them their being, and imparted unto them of his goodness, and manifested his nature to those that were capable of an holy apprehension of it. Now all this God did immediately by the Son; not as a subordinate instrument, but as the principal efficient, being his own power and wisdom. The Son, as the power and wisdom of the Father, "made all things;" so that in that work, the glory of the Father shines forth in him, and no otherwise: by him was the communication of being, goodness, and existence to the creation.

(2.) In the providential rule and disposal of all created things, God farther manifests himself to his creatures, and makes farther communications of his goodness to them, through the same uncreated medium.

(3.) The matter is yet more plain, as to the revelation of his will, and the institution of ordinances from first to last. This is the substance and grand design of the gospel, to reveal the Father in and by the Son; to declare that through him alone we can be made partakers of his grace and goodness; and that no other way can we have either acquaintance or communion with him. See John i, 18. The whole end of the gospel is to give us "the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," 2 Cor. iv, 6.

As the Father is the original and fountain of the whole Trinity as to subsistence, so also as to the operation; he works not but by the Son; who, having the

Divine nature communicated unto him by an ineffable eternal generation, is to communicate the effects of the Divine power, wisdom, and goodness by temporary operation. And thus he becomes the "brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person."

§12. In the dispensation and counsel of grace, God hath determined, that all communications of himself to us shall be by the Son as incarnate. This the whole gospel abundantly testifies; which discovers to us the necessity of coming unto God only by Christ. God in himself is said to be in "thick darkness," as also to dwell in "light whereunto no creature can approach:" which expressions, though seemingly contrary, teach us the same thing, (viz.) the infinite distance of the Divine nature from our apprehensions and conceptions; no man having seen God at any time. But this God, invisible, eternal, incomprehensibly glorious, hath impressed sundry characters of his excellencies, and left footsteps of his blessed properties, on the things that he hath made, that by the consideration and contemplation of them, we might come to some such acquaintance with him as might encourage us to fear and serve him, and to make him our utmost end. But all these expressions of God in other things, besides his Son Christ Jesus, are partial and obscure: partial; not what is necessary to be known, that we may live unto him here, and enjoy him hereafter: obscure; not leading us to any perfect or settled knowledge of him. And hence it is that those who have attempted to come to God any other way than in Christ Jesus, have all failed and come short of his glory. But seeing the Lord Christ is the "brightness of his glory," in whom his glory shines out of the immense darkness that his nature is enwrapped in with

respect to us, and beams out of that inaccessible light which he inhabits; and “the express image of his person,” representing to us all the perfections of his person fully and clearly, it follows, that in the Redeemer alone can we attain a saving acquaintance with Deity. On this account he tells Philip, John xiv, 9, “He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.” Would we know his love and grace, would we admire his wisdom and holiness? Let us labor to come to an intimate gracious acquaintance with his Son Jesus Christ, in whom all these excellencies dwell in their fulness, and by whom alone they are revealed and exhibited to us. Seek the Father in the Son; for out of him not one property of the Divine nature can be savingly apprehended, or rightly understood; but in him all are displayed to our faith and spiritual contemplation. This is at once our greatest wisdom, and most exalted privilege.

§13. *Obs. 3.* Our Lord Jesus Christ, as the Son of God, supports the weight of the whole creation, and disposeth of it by his adorable power and wisdom. Such, awful yet charming thought! such is the nature and condition of the universe, that it could not subsist a moment: nor could any thing in it act regularly to its appointed end, without the continual support, guidance, influence, and disposal of the Son of God. Created things can no more support, act, and dispose themselves, than they could at first make themselves out of nothing. The greatest cannot preserve itself by its greatness, power, or order; nor the least by its distance from opposition. Were there not a mighty hand under all and each one of them, they would sink into confusion; did not an effectual force impel them, they would become a slothful heap; remove sustaining power and active influence, and they instantly precipitate into their primitive nothing. It is true God

hath, in the creation of all things, implanted in every particle of the creation, a special natural inclination and disposition, according to which it is ready to act, move, or work regularly; but he hath not placed this nature and power absolutely in them, and independently of his own power and operation. The sun is endued with a nature to produce all the glorious effects of light and heat, the fire to burn, the wind to blow, &c. But yet neither could sun, or fire, or wind preserve themselves in their being, or retain the principles of their operations, did not the Son of God, by a continual emanation of his eternal power uphold and preserve them; nor could they produce any one effect, did not he work in them, and by them; nor are the sons of men excepted, or any other agents, however free in their choice and operations; for "by him all things consist." It is utterly repugnant to the very nature and being of a God, that he should produce any thing without himself, that should have either a self-subsistence or a self-sufficiency, or be independent on himself. When we name a creature, we name that which hath a derived and dependent being. And that which cannot subsist in and by itself, cannot act so neither. He did not create the world to leave it to an uncertain event; to stand by and to see what would become of it; but the same power and wisdom that produced, doth still attend it, powerfully pervading every particle thereof. To fancy a Divine providence without a continual energetic operation, or a Divine wisdom without constant care and inspection of the works of his hands, is not to form apprehensions of the living God, but to erect an idol in our own imaginations.

§14. This work is peculiarly assigned to the Son, not only as he is the eternal power and wisdom

of God, but also because by his interposition, as undertaking the work of mediation, he reprieved the world from an immediate dissolution upon the first entrance of sin; that it might continue, as it were, the great stage for the mighty works of God's grace, wisdom, and love to be wrought on it. Hence the care of the continuance of the creation, and the disposal thereof, is delegated unto him, as having undertaken to bring forth and consummate the glory of God in it, notwithstanding the hideous breach made upon it by the sin of angels and men. When the work of the reconciliation of all things to God shall be accomplished, the glory of God will be fully retrieved and established for ever.

(1.) We may see from hence the vanity of expecting any thing from the creatures, but what the Lord Christ is pleased to communicate to us by them. They that cannot sustain or actuate themselves, by any power or virtue of their own, are very unlikely of themselves to afford any real relief or help to others. They all abide and exist severally and consist together, in their order and operation, by the powerful word of Christ; and what he will communicate by them, that, and that alone, they will afford us. In themselves they are broken cisterns that will hold no water; they who depend upon them, without the consideration of their constant dependence on Christ, will find at length all their hopes disappointed, and all their enjoyments vanish into nothing.

(2.) Learn hence also the full self-sufficiency, and absolute sovereignty of the Son of God our Savior. A king bears rule over the subjects of his kingdom, but he doth not give them existence; he doth not uphold and actuate them at his pleasure; but every one of them stands upon an equal bottom with himself. He can, indeed, by the permission of God, take away

their lives, but cannot continue their lives at his pleasure one moment, or make them so much as to move a finger. But with the Lord Redeemer it is otherwise; he not only rules over the whole creation, disposing of it according to the rule of his own counsel and pleasure; but they all derive their beings, natures, inclinations, and lives from him: and as this argues his all-sufficiency, so it demonstrates his absolute sovereignty over all other things. Let this teach us our constant dependence on him, and our universal subjection to him.

(3.) And this abundantly discovers the vanity and folly of them, who make use of the creation in opposition to Christ, and his peculiar interest in this world. His own power is the very ground that they stand upon in their daring opposition to him; and all things which they use against him, "consist in him." They hold their lives absolutely at the pleasure of him whom they oppose: and they act against him, without whose continual support and influence they could neither live nor act one moment; which is the greatest madness, and most contemptible folly imaginable.

§15. *Obs. 4.* So great was the work of freeing us from sin, that it could no otherwise be effected but by the self-sacrifice of the Son of God. Our apostle makes it his design in several places to evince, that none of those things, from whence mankind usually expect relief in this case, would yield them any at all. The best that the Gentiles could attain, all that they had to trust to, was but the improvement of natural light and reason, under the conduct of which they sought for rest, glory, and immortality. How miserably they were disappointed in their aims, and what a woful issue all their endeavors had, the apostle shews at large, Rom. i. The Jews, who enjoyed the



benefit of Divine revelation, having lost for the most part the true spiritual import of them, sought for the same ends by the law, and their own diligent observance of it; "They rested in the law," Rom. ii, 17. Now within the compass of these three, natural light, the moral law, and the institution of sacrifices, consist all the hopes and endeavors of sinners after deliverance and acceptance with God. And if all these fail them, as assuredly they will, it is certain there is nothing under heaven that can yield them the least relief. Jehovah is the superior governor of all, and as sin dissolveth the dependence of the creature upon him, should he not avenge that defection, his whole rule and government would be disannulled. But now if this vengeance and punishment should fall on the sinners themselves, they must perish under it eternally; not one of them could escape, or ever be freed from their sins. A commutation then there must be; that the punishment due to sin, which the holiness and righteousness of God exacteth may be inflicted, and mercy and grace shewed to the sinner. And this should teach us to live in an holy admiration of this mighty and wonderful product of the wisdom, righteousness, and grace of God, which appointed this way of delivering sinners, and gloriously accomplished it in the sacrifice of the Son of God. The Holy Ghost every where proposeth this to us, as a mystery, a hidden mystery, which none of the great, or wise, or disputers of the world, ever come to the least acquaintance with. And three things he asserts concerning it:

(1.) That it is revealed in the gospel, and is thence alone to be learned. Whence we are invited again and again, to search and inquire diligently, to this very end, that we may become wise in the knowledge and acknowledgment of this sublime mystery.

(2.) That we cannot in our own strength, and by our own most diligent endeavors, come to an holy acquaintance with it, notwithstanding the revelation that is made of it in the letter of the word; unless moreover we receive from God, the spirit of wisdom, knowledge, and revelation; opening our eyes, making our minds spiritual, and enabling us to discover these depths of the Holy Ghost in a spiritual manner.

(3.) That we cannot, even by these helps, attain in this life to a perfect knowledge of this unfathomable truth; but must still labor to grow in grace and spiritual knowledge.

The scripture every where sets forth the blessedness and happiness of them, who by grace obtain a spiritual insight into this grand mystery, and themselves also find by experience the satisfying excellency thereof with the apostle, Phil. iii, 8. All which considerations are powerful motives to this profitable duty, wherein we have the angels themselves for our associates.

§17. We may also consider the unspeakable love of Christ in this work of his delivering us from sin. And this he did, when we were sinners, when we were lost, when we were children of wrath, under the curse, when no eye did pity us, when no hand could relieve us. And if John mourned, greatly mourned, when he thought there was none found worthy in heaven or earth to open his book of visions, and to unloose the seals thereof; how justly might the whole creation mourn and lament if there had been none found to yield relief, when all were obnoxious to this fatal ruin! And this is an exceeding commendation of the love of Christ, that he set his hand to that work which none could touch; and put his shoulders under that burden which none else could bear, when all lay in a desperate condition. Again: it is a deliverance from eternal

wrath and vengeance, not from a trouble or danger of a few days continuance; not from a momentary suffering; but from everlasting wrath, under the curse of God and power of Satan. And farther: consider the way whereby he did it; not by his word, whereby he made the world; not by his power, whereby he sustains all things; not by paying a price of corruptible things; not by merely revealing a way to us, whereby we ourselves might escape that condition wherein we were, as some foolishly imagine; but by the "sacrifice of himself," making his soul an offering for sin through the eternal Spirit, by laying down his life for us; and greater love can no one manifest. Consider, moreover, his infinite condescension to put himself into that condition wherein, by himself, he might purge our sins. For this purpose, though he was in the form of God, he emptied himself of his glory, made himself of no account, was made flesh, took on him the form of a servant, that he might be obedient unto death, the painful and ignominious death of the cross. Once more; reflect on the end of his undertaking for us; which was the bringing of us unto God, into his love and favor here, and the eternal enjoyment of him hereafter. All these things, I say, doth the scripture insist frequently and largely upon, to set forth the excellency of the love of Christ, to render it admirable and amiable unto us: and these things should we lay up in our hearts, that we may continually ponder them, and give due acceptance and entertainment to this wonderful love of the Son of God.

§18. *Obs.* 5. That there is nothing more vain, foolish, and fruitless, than the opposition which Satan and his agents yet make to the Lord Messiah and his kingdom. Can they ascend into heaven? Can they pluck the Divine regent from his throne? A little time will

manifest eternally this extreme madness. Moreover, the service of the Lord Christ is both safe and honorable. He is both a good and a glorious master; one that sits at the right hand of God; and great is the spiritual and eternal security of all that truly believe in him.

VERSE 4.

*Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.*

§1. Connexion of the words. §2. (I.) The excellency of Christ above angels. §3. (II.) When so exalted. §4. (III.) To what degree. §5. (IV.) How he obtained it. §6. The pertinency of the comparison. §7. Observation.

§1. **H**AVING proceeded thus far in general, the apostle descends now to the consideration of particular instances, in all those whom God employed in the ministration of the law and constitution of the Mosaical worship: and takes occasion from them all to set forth the dignity and incomparable excellencies of Christ, whom in all things he exalts. First, then, he treateth concerning angels, as those who were the most glorious creatures employed in giving of the law. The Hebrews held that, besides the mediation of Moses, God used the ministry of angels in the giving of the law and in other occasional instructions of their forefathers. Holy Stephen, upbraiding them with their abuse and contempt of their greatest privileges, tells them, that they received the law by the disposition or ministry of angels. This then might leave a special prejudice in their minds, that the law being so delivered by angels, must needs have therein the advantage above the gospel, and be therefore immutable. To remove this prejudice, and farther to declare the universal excellency and pre-eminence of Christ, the apostle proves to them out of the scriptures of the Old Testament, that he is exceedingly advanced and glorious above the angels themselves; and

to this purpose produceth four signal testimonies one after another. The apostle hath no design to prove by arguments and testimonies the excellency of the Divine nature above the angelical. Neither is the comparison between the human nature of Christ and the nature of angels. The apostle then treats of the person of Christ, God and man, as the revealer of the gospel, and mediator of the New Testament; and concerning him, as such, are the ensuing testimonies to be interpreted. There are several things considerable in these words. Particularly, what it is that the apostle asserts in them as his general proposition, when he was so preferred above them, the degree of this preference of him above the angels intimated in the comparison, the proof of the assertion, taken from his name, and the way whereby he came to have this name: he obtained it as his lot and inheritance.

§2. (I.) He is (*ἀρεϊτῶν γινόμενος*) *made more excellent* than the angels; is preferred above them, exalted, actually placed in more power, glory, and dignity. This John the Baptist affirms of him, “he was preferred before me, because he was before me.” Preferred before him; called to another manner of office than that in which John ministered: made before or superior to him in dignity, because he was before him in nature and existence. And this is the proper sense of the words when here applied to the angels.

§3. (II.) And this gives us light into our second inquiry, viz. when it was, that Christ was then exalted above the angels? Some say, that it was in the time of his incarnation; for then the human nature, being taken into personal subsistence with the Son of God, became more excellent than that of the angels. Some say that it was at the time of his baptism, when he was anointed with the Spirit, for the discharge of his pro-

phetical office; but it is the time of his resurrection, ascension, and exaltation at the right hand of God which ensued thereon that is here designed, as evidently appears from the text and context. For, that was the time when he was gloriously vested with all power in heaven and earth. The order also of the apostle's discourse leads us to fix on this season. After he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down, &c. being then made so much more excellent. Besides, the first testimony produced by the apostle in confirmation of his assertion, is expressly applied to his resurrection and the glory that ensued. And this unrivalled preference is plainly included in that grant of all power which our Lord himself mentions, Matt. xxviii, 13, and which Saint Paul expounds, Eph. i, 21, 22; to which we may add, that the first testimony used by the apostle is the word that God spake unto his king, when he set him upon his holy hill of Sion, Psalm ii, 6, 7, 8; which typically expresseth his glorious instalment in his heavenly kingdom.

§4. (III.) In this preference and exaltation of the Lord Christ, there is a degree intimated; being made "so much more," &c. Now our conceptions here are wholly to be regulated by the name given him. Consider, saith the apostle, how much the name given the Messiah, excels the names given to angels; so much doth he himself excel them in glory, authority, and power; for their names are severally given them of God, to signify their state and condition. Observe, saith he, how they are called of God, by what names and titles he owns them, and you may learn the difference between them. This name he mentions in the next verse; God said unto him, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." It is not absolutely his being the Son of God that is intended; but

that by the testimony of the Holy Ghost, God said these words unto him, "Thou art my Son;" and thereby declared his state and condition, to be far above that of the angels.

§5. (IV.) The last thing considerable is, how the Lord Christ came by this name? (Κεκληρονομηκε) He "obtained it by inheritance," as his peculiar lot and portion for ever. As he was made the heir of all, so he inherited a more excellent name than the angels. Now he was made heir of all, in that all things being made and formed by him, the Father committed unto him as mediator a peculiar power over all things, to be disposed of by him for all the ends of his mediation: so also being the natural and eternal Son of God, upon the discharge of his work, the Father declared and pronounced that to be his name; See Luke i, 35; Isa. vii, 14; ix, 6. His being the Son of God is the proper foundation of his being called so; and his discharge of his office the occasion of its declaration; so he came unto t "by right of inheritance," when he was "declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead," Rom. i, 4.

§6. This discourse of the apostle, proving the pre-eminence of the Messiah above the angels, was peculiarly necessary to the Hebrews; and it is to this day a tradition amongst them, that "the Messiah shall be exalted above Abraham, and Moses, and the ministering angels." Besides, they acknowledged the scriptures of the Old Testament wherein the apostle shews them this truth was contained. But they were dull and slow in making the profitable application of these principles for the confirmation of their faith in the gospel, as the apostle chargeth them, chap. v, 11, 12. We may farther remark, that they had at that time great speculations about the glory, dignity, and excellency

of angels, and were fallen into a kind of worshipping of them. And it is not improbable, that this vain curiosity, and dangerous superstition, was heightened by the controversy agitated between the Pharisees and Saducees about them; the latter denying their existence, the former, whom the body of the people followed, exalting them above measure, and inclining to an idolatrous veneration of them. It was necessary, therefore, in order to take them off from this idolatrous superstition, to instruct them in the pre-eminence of the Redeemer above them all; that so their thoughts might be directed to, and their trust placed in him alone.

§7. *Obs.* All pre-eminence and exaltation of one above others depends on the supreme counsel and will of God. Christ, as mediator, is a pattern of all privileges and pre-eminence in others. Grace, mercy, and glory, spiritual, and eternal things, are those wherein really there is any difference among the sons of men; and that any one in this respect is preferred before another, depends merely on the sole good pleasure of God; seeing no one in these things makes himself to differ from another, neither is he possessed of any thing that he hath not received. And this discrimination of things by the supreme will of God, especially spiritual and eternal, is the spring and rule of all that glory which he will manifest; and in which he will be eternally exalted.



## VERSE 5.

*For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? and again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?*

§1. Introduction. §2. (I.) The apostle's manner of producing the testimony. §3—5. (II.) The testimony itself produced. §6—8. (III.) The genuine sense of the passage. §9—13. Observations.

§1. **T**HE apostle here proceeds to confirm his proposition concerning the pre-eminence of the Messiah above the angels, by sundry testimonies produced out of the Old Testament; two of which are contained in this verse. Let us consider,

I. The manner in which the apostle produces the testimony; “Unto which of the angels said he at any time?”

II. The testimony itself, “Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.” We shall then,

III. Inquire into the genuine sense of the passage, and,

IV. Make some observations.

§2. (I.) In the former three things may be observed:

1. That the testimony insisted on, being a matter of *faith*, is that of the scripture. Our apostle here confidently refers the Hebrews to the acknowledged rule of their faith and worship; whose authority he knew they would not decline, Isa. viii, 21.

2. That the apostle argues negatively from the authority and perfection of the scripture in things relating to faith and the worship of God. It is no where said in the scripture to angels; therefore they have not the name spoken of, or not in that manner wherein it is ascribed to the Messiah. An argument taken negatively from the authority of the scripture in matters of faith, or what relates to the worship of God, is

valid and effectual, and here consecrated for ever for the use of the church.

3. That the apostle either indeed grants, or else, for argument sake, condescends to the apprehensions of the Hebrews, that there is a distinction of degrees and pre-eminence amongst the angels themselves. "To which of the angels said he?" This respects not only the community of them, but any or all of the chief or princes among them.

§3. (II.) We now proceed to the *testimony itself* here produced. Three things are required to make it pertinent to the end proposed: That the Messiah is intended; that a signal name be appropriated to him; that this be a proof of his pre-eminence above angels.

1. That it is the *Messiah* who is prophesied of in the second Psalm, from whence the words are taken. This with all Christians is put beyond dispute by its application to Christ in several places of the New Testament, as Acts iv, 25—27; Acts xiii, 33; Heb. v, 5. It is certain also, that the Jews esteemed that psalm to relate to the Messiah. But it was not enough for the apostle, that those with whom he dealt acknowledged these things, unless they were really so; that his argument might proceed (*ex veris*) from what was true, as well as (*ex concessis*) from what was granted. There is no cogent reason why we should acknowledge David and his kingdom to be at all intended in this psalm. The apostles, we see, apply it to the Lord Christ without any mention of David, and that four several times; twice in the Acts, and twice in this epistle. We may indeed grant that consideration was had of David and his kingdom typically, but not absolutely. When the thing signified is principally aimed at, it is not necessary that every thing spoken should be applicable properly to the type itself; it being sufficient that there

was in the type somewhat that bore a general resemblance to what was principally intended. On the contrary, where the type is principally intended, and an application made to the thing signified only by way of general allusion, there it is not required that all the particulars assigned to the type should belong to the anti-type. Hence though in general David, and his deliverance from trouble, with the establishment of his throne, might be respected in this psalm, as an obscure representation of the kingdom of Christ; yet sundry particulars in it, and among them this mentioned by our apostle, seem to have no respect to him, but directly and immediately to intend the Messiah. If it yet be supposed that what is hence spoken, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee," is also to be applied to David, yet it is not ascribed to him personally and absolutely, but merely considered as the type of Christ: what then is principally and directly intended in the words, is to be sought for in Christ alone; it being sufficient to preserve the nature of the type, that there was in David any resemblance or representation of it. Thus, whether David be admitted here as a type of Christ or no, the apostle's purpose stands firm, that the words were principally and properly spoken of the Messiah.

§4. 2. It is required that in the testimony produced a signal name be appropriated to the Messiah, so as that he may inherit it exclusively. It is not being called by this or that name, in common with others, that is intended; but such a peculiar assignation of a name to him, as whereby he might for ever be distinguished from others. Thus many may be "beloved of the Lord," and be so termed; but yet Solomon only was peculiarly called (יְדִידִיָּה) *Jedediah*; and by that name was distinguished from others. In this way it

is that the Messiah has this name assigned to him. He is not called the "Son of God" upon such a common account as angels and men, the one by creation, the other by adoption, peculiarly and by way of eminence.

§5. 3. This name must be such as proves his pre-eminence above all the angels. It was never said to any angel personally, upon his own account, "Thou art the Son of God," especially with the reason of the appellation annexed; "This day have I begotten thee." It is not, then, the general name of "a son," or "the sons" of God, that the apostle insisteth on, but the peculiar assignation of this name to the Lord Jesus on his own particular account, with the reason subjoined, "this day have I begotten thee." And this appropriation proves his unrivalled dignity: for it is evident, that God intended thereby to declare his singular honor and glory, giving him a name to denote it, that was never assigned to any mere creature, as his peculiar inheritance.

§6. (III.) We shall briefly inquire after the genuine sense of the words absolutely considered. Expositors are much divided about the precise intentment of this phrase, "This day have I begotten thee." Some suppose the words contain the formal reason of Christ being properly called the Son of God, and so to denote his eternal generation. Others take the words only to express an occasion of giving this name at a certain season to the Lord Christ, when he was revealed or declared to be the Son of God. And some assign this to the day of his incarnation, when he declared him to be his Son, and that he should be so called, Luke i, 35. Some to the day of his baptism, when he was again solemnly proclaimed from heaven to be so, Matt. iii, 17. Some to the day of his resurrection, when he

was declared to be the Son of God with power, Rom. i, 3; Acts xiii, 33. And some to the day of his ascension. All these interpretations are consistent and reconcilable with each other, inasmuch as they are all means serving to the same end; that of his resurrection from the dead being the most signal, and fixed upon in particular by our apostle in his application of this testimony: Acts xiii, 33. And in this sense alone the words have any appearance of respect to David as a type of Christ; as he was raised up and established in his rule and kingdom. Neither indeed does the apostle treat in this place of the eternal generation of the Son, but of his exaltation and pre-eminence above angels. The eternal sonship is to be taken only declaratively; and that declaration to be made in his resurrection and exaltation. But every one is left to the liberty of his own judgment herein. And this is the first testimony, whereby the apostle confirms his assertion, from the name that he inherits as his peculiar right and possession.

§7. For the farther confirmation of the same truth he adds another testimony of the same import: "And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son." Indeed the main difficulty, with which expositors generally trouble themselves in this place, ariseth purely from their own mistake. They cannot understand how these words should prove a "natural sonship" of Jesus Christ, which they suppose they are produced to confirm; seeing it is from thence that he is exalted above the angels. But the truth is, the words are not designed to any such end; his aim being only to prove, that the Lord Christ has a name assigned him more excellent, either in itself, or in the manner of its being attributed, than any that is given to the angels; which is the medium of his argument to prove him

the most exalted revealer of the will of God. The words are taken from 2 Sam. vii, 14, and are part of the answer returned from God to David by Nathan, upon his resolution to build him an house. The difficulty ariseth hence, that it is not easy to apprehend how any thing at all in these words should be appropriated to Christ.

1. Some cutting that knot which they suppose cannot otherwise be untied, affirm that Solomon is not intended in these words, but that they are a direct and immediate prophecy of Christ, who was to be the son of David, and who was to build the spiritual house or temple of God. But this is to make the whole answer of God equivocal. For David inquired of Nathan about building an house or temple: Nathan returns him an answer from God, that he shall not do so, but that his Son should perform that work. This answer David understands of his immediate son, and of a material house, and thereupon makes an answerable provision for it. It remains then, that Solomon primarily and immediately is intended in these words.

2. Some on the other hand affirm, the whole prophecy to be so exclusively fulfilled in Solomon, that there is no direct respect therein to our Lord Jesus Christ. The words, "If he commit iniquity I will chastise him with the rod of men;" cannot, say they; be applied to him who did no sin, neither was there guile found in his mouth. They therefore plead, that the apostle applied these words to Christ only by way of allegory. But,

3. The words here cited principally concern the person of Christ himself, yet being uttered in the form of a covenant, they have respect also to him as the head of that covenant, which God makes with all the elect in him. And thus Christ's mystical head and mem-

bers are referred to in the prophecy; and therefore David in pleading this oracle, Psalm lxxxix, 30, changeth those words, "if he commit iniquity," into "if his children forsake my law."

§8. But more particularly we may say with others, that both Solomon and Christ are here intended; Solomon literally as the type; Christ principally and mystically as typified. Our sense herein shall be farther explained and confirmed in the ensuing considerations.

1. There never was any one type of Christ and his offices, that entirely represented him, and all his undertakings, because of the perfection of his person, and the excellency of his office. Hence the multiplying of types.

2. No type of Christ was in all things a type of him, but only in some expressly intended particular. Thus David was a type of Christ in conquering the church's enemies, &c. but not in his private actions, whether as man, king, or captain.

3. Not all things spoken of a typical person, even in that wherein he was a type, are spoken of him as a type; but some of them may belong to him in his personal capacity only. And the reason is plain, because he who was a type by God's institution, might morally fail in the performance of his duty, even in those things wherein he was a type. Thus that expression, "If he sin against me" related to the moral duty of Solomon in the typical administration of his kingdom.

4. What is spoken of any type, as such, doth not really and properly belong to him, or that which was the type, but the anti-type. For as to the type itself, it was enough that it possessed some resemblance of what was principally intended; the things belonging to the

anti-type being affirmed of it only analogically, on account of the relation between them by God's institution. Thus at the sacrifice of expiation, the scape goat is said to "bear away the sins of the people into a land not inhabited;" not really, but only in an instituted representation; for the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Much less may the things consequent upon Christ's real taking away of our sins, be ascribed to the devoted beast. So in this case, the words applied by the apostle do not at all prove that Solomon, of whom they were typically spoken, should be preferred above all angels; seeing he only represented him who was so restrictively, not absolutely. These considerations being premised, I say, the words insisted on by the apostle, "I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son," belonged primarily to Solomon, denoting the fatherly love, care, and protection that God would afford him in his kingdom, so far as Christ was represented by him therein, which requires not that they must absolutely, and in all just consequences, belong to the person of Solomon; but principally they intend Christ himself, expressing that eternal unchangeable love which the Father bore to him, grounded on the relation of father and son. Now herein God promiseth to be to Christ, as exalted to his throne, a father in love, care, and power, to protect and carry him on in his rule to the end of the world. And, therefore, upon his ascension he says, that he went to "his God and Father," John xx, 17; and he rules in the name and majesty of God, Mic. v, 4. This, and not the eternal and natural relation that subsists between the Father and Son, which neither is nor can be the subject of any promise, is intended. And this is the apostle's first argument, whereby he proves that the Son, as the re-



vealer of the mind and will of God in the gospel, is made more excellent than the angels, whose glory was a refuge to the Jews in their adherence to legal rites. According to our proposed method we shall,

§9. (IV.) Draw hence some instructions for our use and edification.

*Obs.* 1. Every thing in the scripture is instructive. The apostle's arguing in this place is not so much from the thing spoken, as from the manner wherein it is spoken. Nothing in scripture is useless, nothing needless, because it proceeds from infinite wisdom, which hath put an impress of itself upon it, and filled all its capacity; it being full of wisdom as the sea is of water, which fills and covers all the parts of it. The inspired volume contains, directly or by consequence, the whole revelation of God to men. God hath given it to his servants for their continual exercise day and night, and requires of them their utmost diligence and endeavors. A constant awe of the majesty, authority, and holiness of God in his word is the only teachable frame, and the humble are made wise therein; it is an endless storehouse, a bottomless treasure of Divine truth: there is gold in every sand of it; all the wise men in the world may, each one for himself, learn some important lesson out of every word, considered in its proper connexion, and yet leave enough still behind for the instruction of all that shall come after them. The fountains and springs of wisdom in it are deep, and will never be dry. We may have much truth and power out of a word; sometimes enough, but never all that is in it. There will still be enough remaining to exercise and refresh us anew for ever. So that we may attain a true sense, but we can never attain the full sense of any place.

§12. *Obs. 2.* It is lawful to draw consequences from scripture assertions; and such consequences rightly deduced are infallibly true and decisive. Thus from the name given to Christ, the apostle deduceth, by just consequence, his exaltation and pre-eminence above angels. Nothing will rightly follow from truth but what is true, and that of the same nature with the truth from whence it is deduced; so that whatever, by just consequence, is drawn from the word of God, is itself also the word of God, and of truth infallible: and to deprive the church of this liberty in the interpretation of the word, is to deprive it of the chief benefit intended by it. This is that on which the whole ordinance of preaching is founded: which makes that which is derived from the word, to have the power, authority, and efficacy of the word accompanying it. Thus, though it be the proper work and effect of the word of God to quicken, regenerate, sanctify, and purify the elect, and the word primarily and directly is only that which is written in the scriptures; yet we find all these effects produced by the preaching of the word, when perhaps not one sentence of the scripture is repeated verbatim.

§13. *Obs. 3.* The declaration of Christ to be the Son of God is originally the care and work of the Father. It is the design of the Father in all things to glorify the Son; that all men may honor him even as they honor the Father.

§14. *Obs. 4.* God the Father is perpetually present with the Lord Christ, in love, care, and power, while engaged in the administration of his office, as he is the mediator, head, and king of the church. He hath taken upon himself to stand by him, to own him, to effect every thing that is needful for the establishment of his throne, the enlargement of his kingdom,

the ruin and destruction of his enemies. And this he will assuredly do to the end of the world, because he hath promised to give him a throne, a glorious kingdom, an everlasting rule and government; and what he hath promised in love and grace; he will make good with care and power. See Isa. xlix, 5—9; chap. iv, 7, 9. Besides, these and similar promises have respect to the obedience of Christ in the work of mediation, which being performed strictly and to the utmost, gives him a peculiar right to them; and makes that just and righteous in the performance, which was merely sovereign grace in the promise. The condition being absolutely performed, the promise shall be certainly accomplished. Again, God hath appointed him to reign in the midst of his enemies, and mighty oppositions are made on all hands to his whole design and every part. This makes the presence of the authority and power of the Father necessary to him in his work. This he asserts as a great ground of consolation to his disciples, John x, 28, 29. There will be great plucking; great contending to take believers out of the hand of Christ, one way or other, to make them come short of eternal life; and though his own power be such, as is able to preserve them, yet he lets them know also for their greater assurance and consolation, that his Father, who is over all, is greater and more powerful than all, greater than he himself in the work of mediation, John xiv, 28; is also engaged with him in their defence. The Lord stands by him on his right hand, to smite and tread down his enemies; all that rise against his design, interest, and kingdom, be they never so many, and never so great, he will ruin them, and make them his footstool every one. See Micah v, 4.

## VERSE 6.

*And again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.*

§1. Connexion of the words. §2. In what sense Christ is first born. §3. The subject stated. §4. (I.) That the Son is intended in the passage referred to. §5. (II.) That they are the angels who are commanded to worship him. §6. (III.) The force of the conclusion, Christ's pre eminence above angels. §7—11 (IV.) Observations.

§1. **T**HE apostle proceeds to the confirmation of the same important truth, by another testimony. The phrase of "bringing him in," refers to Old Testament promises of his coming into the world, Mal. iii, 1, 2, "The Lord whom ye seek shall come; but who may abide the day of his coming?" Now it was not any one special act, nor any one particular day, that was designed in that and the like promises: but it is the whole work of God in bringing forth the Messiah by his conception, nativity, unction with the Spirit, resurrection, sending of the Holy Ghost, and preaching of the gospel, which is the subject of those promises. "When he brings the first-born into the world;" that is, after he had kept his church, under the administration of the law given by angels, in the hands of Moses the typical mediator, in expectation of the promised Messiah; when he bringeth him forth to, and carries him on triumphantly through his work, he says, "Let all the angels of God worship him." (Προσκυνήσασαν αὐτῷ) "Worship him." The word, in the New Testament, is nowhere used but for *religious worship*, which is due to God alone; and when it is recorded of any that they did (προσκυνοῦν) *perform the duty and homage denoted by this word* to any but God, it is also recorded as their idolatry, Rev. xiii, 12, 16. As to several sorts of religious worship diversified by its objects, the scripture knows nothing of it. The word

properly denotes to *bow down*, and when it refers to God, it respects the inward reverence and subjection of our minds. And without controversy, he who is to be worshipped, is greater than they whose duty it is to worship him.

§2. In what sense is Christ called (*πρωτοτοκος*) “the first born?” The common answer is, not that any was born after him, in the same way, but that none was born before him. But if we suppose that his person and eternal generation may be intended in this expression, we must make (*πρωτοτοκος*) “the first born,” to be the same with (*μονογενης*) “only begotten,” which is now allowable. On the other hand, Christ has not many brethren in the same kind of sonship, whereby he is himself the Son of God, and is on that account, called the first-born; because,

1. Christ in his sonship is (*μονογενης*) the *only begotten* Son of God; and therefore it is impossible that God should have any more sons in the same kind with him; for if he had, certainly the Lord Christ could not be (*μονογονης*) his *only begotten* Son; besides, his essence, being infinite, took up the whole nature of Divine filiation; so that it is impossible there should be any other of the same kind.

2. The only kind of sonship that believers share in, is that of adoption. Now if Christ be the Son of God in this kind, he must of necessity, antecedently to his adoption, be a member of another family, that is, of the family of Satan and the world, as we are by nature, and from thence be transplanted by adoption into the family of God; which is blasphemy to imagine.

3. If this were so, that the Lord Christ and believers were the Sons of God by the same kind of sonship, differing only in degrees, what great matter is there in the condescension mentioned by the apostle, chap. ii,

11; that he is not ashamed to call them brethren; which yet he compares with the condescension of God, in being called their God, chap. xi, 16. It is not, therefore, the thing itself of being the first born, but the dignity and privilege that attended it, which are designed in this appellation, so Col. i, 15. He is said to be (πρωτοτοκος πασης κτισεως) "the first-born of the creation;" which is no more but he that hath power and authority over all the creatures of God; and implies the same with what we have insisted on, of his being "heir of all," which was the privilege of the first-born. And this privilege was sometimes transmitted to others that were not the first-born, although the natural course of their nativity could not be changed, Gen. xxi, 10; xlix, 3, 4, 8. The Lord Christ, then, by the appointment of the Father, being entrusted with the whole inheritance of heaven and earth, and authority to dispose of it, that he might give out portions to all the rest of God's family, really is, and is therefore called the first-born thereof. This is the sum: again, in another place, where the Holy Ghost foretels bringing forth into the world, amongst men, him that is the Lord and heir of all, to undertake his work, and to enter into his kingdom and glory, the Lord speaks to this purpose, "Let all the angels of God worship him."

§3. To manifest the propriety, appositeness, and force of this testimony, three things are required:

I. That it is the Son who is intended in the passage referred to, and so designed as the person to be worshipped.

II. That they are angels who are commanded to worship him. Whence it will follow,

III. That on these suppositions the words prove the pre-eminence of Christ above angels. And then,

IV. Way will be made for suitable observations.

§4. (I.) With them who acknowledge the Divine authority of this epistle, it might be sufficient for the support and dignity of this argument, to reflect, that the place is applied to Christ, and this passage to ministering angels, by the same infallible Spirit who first indited the scripture. Many of the ancients conceive the words to be cited from Deut. xxxii, 42; where they expressly occur in the sept. translation: but there are no such words in the original text, nor any thing spoken that might give occasion to the sense expressed in them; but the whole verse is inserted in the Greek version quite besides the scope of the place. And indeed I no way question, but that this addition to the Greek text was made after the apostle had used this testimony. For some officious person, not considering from whence it was taken, because the words do not occur exactly in the Greek, it is not unlikely inserted it there amidst other words of an alike sound. But later expositors generally agree, that the words are taken out of Psalm xcvi, 7, where the original is rendered by the septuagint with a very small variation in the words, and none at all in the sense. And the matter of the psalm makes it manifest, that the Holy Ghost treats in it about God's "bringing in the first begotten into the world," and the setting up of his kingdom by him. A kingdom is described wherein God would reign, which should destroy idolatry and false worship; a kingdom wherein the isles of the Gentiles should rejoice, being called to an interest therein; a kingdom that was to be preached, proclaimed, to the increase of light and holiness in the world, with the manifestation of the glory of God to the ends of the earth. Each part declares the kingdom of Christ to be intended in the psalm, and

consequently that it is a prophecy of the “bringing in of the first begotten into the world.”

§5. (II.) Our second inquiry is, whether the angels be intended in these words. Some, as all the modern Jews, say, that the gods of the Gentiles, those whom they worship, are intended; so confounding (אלילים אלהים) *gods* and *vain idols* in this place; but,

It cannot be, that the psalmist should exhort the idols of the heathen, some whereof were devils, some dead men, some inanimate parts of the creation, to a reverential worshipping of God reigning over all. Besides,

The word *Elohim* doth never alone, and absolutely taken, signify false gods or idols, but only when it is joined with some other word discovering its application; as “his god,” or “their gods,” or the gods of this or that people: in which case it is rendered by the septuagint, sometimes (ειδωλον) “an idol,” sometimes (χειροποιητον) an “idol made with hands,” sometimes (βδελυγμα) an “abomination;” but here it hath no such limitation or restriction. Whereas therefore there are some creatures, who by reason of some peculiar excellency and likeness to God, or subordination to him in his work, are called gods, it must be those, or some of them, that are intended in the expression: now these are either magistrates or angels; not the former, there being no occasion administered for such an apostrophe, therefore the latter, who are called *Elohim* (λεγομενοι θεοι, Cor. viii, 5;) are intended. Having called on the whole creation to rejoice in the bringing forth of the kingdom of God, and pressed his exhortation upon things on the earth, he turns to the ministering angels, and calls on them to the discharge of



their duty to the king of that kingdom. For the command itself, it consisted in these two things:

1. A declaration of the state and condition of the Messiah, which is such, as that he is a meet object of religious adoration to the angels, and attended with peculiar motives to the discharge of their duty. The former he hath from his Divine nature, the latter from his work, with his state and dignity that ensued thereon.

2. An intimation of the pleasure of God to the angels, not merely that Divine worship was absolutely due to the Son of God, for that they knew from the first instant of their creation, but, that all honor and glory were due to him on account of his work and office, as mediator and king of his church.

§6. (III.) It remaineth only, that we hint how this testimony, thus explained, was suitable to the apostle's design and purpose. Now it is impossible that there should be any more clear or full demonstration of this truth, that the Lord Christ hath an unspeakable pre-eminence above the angels, than this, that they are all appointed and commanded by God himself to adore him with Divine and religious worship. We may now, therefore,

§7. (IV.) Consider what observations the words will afford us for our own instruction.

*Obs.* 1. The authority of God speaking in the scripture is that alone which Divine faith rests upon, and is to be resolved into. "He saith." For as faith is an act of religious obedience, it respects the authority of God requiring it; and as it is a religious infallible assent of the mind, it regards the truth and veracity of God as its object. On this alone it rests, "God saith." And in whatever God speaks in the scripture, his truth

and authority manifest themselves to the satisfaction of faith, and no where else doth it find rest.

§8. *Obs. 2.* For the begetting, increasing, and strengthening of faith, it is useful to have important and fundamental truths confirmed by many testimonies of scripture. "Again he saith." Any one word of God is sufficient to establish the most important truth to eternity, so as to uphold the salvation of all mankind if suspended thereon; neither can any thing impeach or weaken what is so confirmed. But God dealeth not upon strict terms. Infinite condescension lies at the bottom of all his dealings with us. He respects not what the nature of the thing strictly requires, but what is needful to our infirmities. Hence he multiplies his commands and promises, and confirms all by his oath, swearing to his truth by himself, to take away all pretence of distrust and unbelief. For this cause, also, he multiplies testimonies to the truth, wherein the concerns of his glory and our obedience lie; what is (it may be) obscure in one, is cleared in another; and so what doubts and fears remain on the consideration of one testimony, are removed by another, whereby the souls of believers are carried on to a full assurance: and, therefore, because such is our weakness that there is great need thereof in ourselves, such is the goodness of God that there is no want of it in the word. And this should teach us to abound in the study and search of the scriptures, that we may thereby come to be established in the truth. God hath thus left us many testimonies to each important truth, and he hath not done it in vain; he knows our need of it: and for us to neglect this great effect of Divine wisdom, grace, and love, is unspeakable folly.

§9. *Obs.* 3. The whole creation is deeply concerned in God's bringing forth Christ into the world, and his exaltation in his kingdom,

(1.) Because in that work consisted the principal manifestation of the wisdom, power, and goodness of God. The very inanimate parts of the world are introduced, by a figure, rejoicing, exulting, shouting, and clapping their hands, when the glory of God is manifested; in all which, their suitableness and propensity to their proper end is declared; as also, by their being burdened and groaning under such a state and condition of things, as doth any way eclipse the glory of their Maker. Now in this work of bringing forth the first-born is the glory of God principally and eminently exalted: for the Lord Christ is the brightness of his glory; and in him the treasures of wisdom, grace, and goodness are laid up.

(2.) The whole creation receiveth a real advancement and honor in the Son being made the "first-born of every creature," that is, the special heir and Lord of them all. Their being brought into a new dependence on the Lord Christ, is their honor, and they are exalted by becoming his possession. And however any part of it be violently, for a season, detained under its old bondage, yet it hath substantial grounds of an earnest expectation of a full and total deliverance, a glorious liberty, by virtue of this primogeniture of Christ.

(3.) Angels and men, the inhabitants of heaven and earth, the principal parts of the creation, on whom God hath in an especial manner enstamped his own likeness and image, are hereby made partakers of such inestimable benefits, as indispensably call for rejoicing, thankfulness, and gratitude. And if this be the duty of all without exceptions, it is easy to discern in what a special

manner it is incumbent on believers, whose benefit and glory was principally intended in the whole of this stupendous work. Should they be wanting in this duty, God might as of old call heaven and earth to witness against them.

§10. *Obs.* 4. The command of God is the ground and reason of all religious worship. He saith, "Worship him all ye angels." Now the command of God is two-fold, formal and vocal; or real and interpretative. The very nature of an intelligent creature made for the glory of God, and placed in a moral dependence upon him, and subjection to him, hath in it the force of a command, as to the worship and service that God requireth. But this law in man being blotted and impaired through sin, God hath in mercy to us collected and disposed all the directions and commands of it in vocal formal precepts, recorded in his word; whereunto he hath superadded sundry new commands in the institutions of his worship. With angels it is otherwise. The ingrafted law of their creation requiring of them the worship of God, and obedience to his whole will, is kept and preserved entire; so that they have no need to have it expressed in vocal formal commands. And by virtue of this law were they obliged to constant and everlasting worship of the eternal Son of God, as being created and upheld by him. But now when God brings forth his Son into the world, and placeth him in a new condition of being incarnate, and so becoming the head of his church, there is a new modification of the worship that is due to him brought in, and a new respect to things not considered in the first creation. Hence God gives a new command to the angels for that peculiar kind of worship and honor which is due to him in that state. Thus in one way or other command is the ground and cause of all worship. For,

All worship is obedience; obedience respects authority; and authority exerts itself in commands. And if this authority be not the authority of God, the worship performed in obedience to it, is not the worship of God, but of him or them whose commands and authority are the reason and cause of it. It is the authority of God alone that can make any worship to be religious, or the performance of it to be an act of obedience to him.

§11. We might hence also farther observe,

(1.) That the mediator of the new covenant is, in his own person, "God blessed for ever," to whom Divine or religious worship is due from the angels themselves. As also that,

(2.) The Father, upon the account of the work of Christ in the world, and his kingdom thence ensuing, gives a new command to the angels to worship him, his glory being greatly concerned therein. And that,

(3.) Great is the church's security and honor, when the head of it is worshipped by all the angels in heaven. And also that,

(4.) It can be no duty of the saints to worship angels, who are their fellow servants in the worship of Jesus Christ.

VERSE 7.

*And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.*

§1. The subject stated. §2, 3. (I.) Who they are of whom the psalmist speaks.  
 §4. (II.) What it is that he affirmeth of them. §5, 6. (III.) Observations.

§1. **H**AVING in one testimony from the scriptures, expressing the subjection of angels to the Lord Christ, signally proved his main design; the apostle proceeds to his third argument in proof of the same point. And here we shall inquire,

I. *Who* they are of whom the psalmist speaks?

II. *What* it is that he affirmeth of them? And then,

III. Improve the subject by suitable observations.

§2. The modern Jews deny that there is any mention made of angels; and affirm, that the psalmist treats of the winds, with thunder and lightning, which God employs as his messengers and ministers to accomplish his will and pleasure. But as this opinion is directly contradictory to the authority of the apostle; so is it also to the design of the psalmist, the sense of the words, and the consent of the ancient Jews; and so is not admissible. Some aver that the winds and meteors are principally intended, but yet so, as that God affirming, that he makes the winds his messengers, doth also intimate that it is the work and employment of his angels above to be his messengers also; and that because he maketh use of their ministry to cause those winds and fires, whereby he accomplisheth his will, and this they illustrate by the fire and winds caused by them on Mount Sinai, at the giving of the law. But this interpretation, whatever is pretended to the contrary, doth not really differ from the former, denying angels to be intentionally spoken of, and only hooking in, as it were, a respect to them, not to be seen to contradict the apostle. Others grant, that it is the angels of whom the apostle treats, but make spirits to be the subject of what is affirmed, and angels to be the predicate. In this sense, God is said to make those spiritual substances, those inhabitants of heaven, his messengers, employing them in his service, them whose nature is a flaming fire, that is, the seraphims, to be his ministers to accomplish his pleasure; making the term "angels" to denote merely an employment, not persons.

§3. But neither of these interpretations appears satisfactory. On the contrary, that the winds and tempests and their use in the earth are not intended, either by the psalmist or the apostle, and that the angels are properly designed by both, might be shewn from the scope and design of the passages, the consent of the ancient Jews, from the common use of the word (מלאכים) rendered *angels*, seeing no reason can be given why it should not denote them here; from the apostle and Septuagint fixing the articles before the words (αγγελους and λειτουργους) *angels* and *ministers*, which plainly determine them to be the subject spoken of. Not to insist particularly on these things, let it be only observed, that the apostle's intention is to prove by this testimony, that the angels are employed in such works and services, and in such a manner, as that they are no way to be compared to the Son of God, in respect of that office which, as Mediator, he hath undertaken; which the sense and construction now contended for, but no other, evidently prove.

§4. (II.) Our next inquiry is after *what* is affirmed concerning these angels and ministers spoken of, and that is, that God makes them "spirits" and a "flame of fire." Some suppose that the creation of angels is contended, and the nature whereof they were made. He made them spirits; that is, of a spiritual substance; and his heavenly ministers quick, powerful, agile, as a flaming fire. But the psalm evidently refers to the providence of God employing angels, and not to his power in making them. And the apostle in this place hath nothing to do with the essence and nature of the angels, but with their dignity, honor, and employment. Wherefore the providence of God in disposing and employing of them in his service is intended in the words, and so they may have a double sense; either,

1. That God employeth his angels and heavenly ministers in the production of those *winds* (רוחות) and *fire*; (אש להט) *thunder and lightning*, whereby he executeth many judgments in the world. Or,

(2.) A note of similitude may be understood to complete the sense; which is expressed in the Targum on the psalm; he maketh or sendeth his angels like the wind, or like a flaming fire; maketh them speedy, spiritual, agile, powerful, quickly and effectually accomplishing the work appointed them. Either way this is the plain intendment of the psalm; that God employeth his angels in effecting the works of his providence here below, in that way and manner. This, saith the apostle, is the testimony which the Holy Ghost gives concerning them; but now consider what the scripture saith concerning the Son, how it calls him God, how it ascribes a throne and a kingdom to him, (testimonies whereof he produceth in the next verses) and you will easily discern his pre-eminence above them.

§5. (III.) The words thus explained, let the following things be observed:

*Obs.* 1. Our conceptions of the angels, their nature, office, and work are to be regulated by the scripture. This will keep us to that becoming sobriety in things above us, which both the scripture greatly commends, and is exceeding reasonable. And the rule of that sobriety is given us for ever, Deut. xxix, 28, "Secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but revealed things to us and our children." Divine revelation alone is the rule and measure of our knowledge in these things, which bounds and determines our sobriety. And hence the apostle, condemning the curiosity of men in this very subject about angels, makes the nature of their sin to consist in exceeding these bounds. This



alone will bring us into any certainty and truth. If men would keep themselves to the word of God, they would have assurance and evidence of truth in their conceptions, without which, pretended high and raised notions are but the shadow of a dream, and worse than professed ignorance.

§6. *Obs. 2.* We may hence observe that the glory, or true honor of angels, lies in their subserviency to the providence of God; it lies not so much in their nature, as in their work and service. God hath endowed the angels with a very excellent nature, furnished them with many eminent properties of wisdom, power, and agility; but their glory consists, not merely in their nature itself, and its essential properties, all which abide in the most horrid and detested part of the whole creation, the devils! but, in their conformity to the mind and will of God, their active moral endowments: these make them amiable, glorious, excellent. Hence remark, that the greatest glory that any creature can be made partaker of, is to serve the pleasure, and set forth the praises, of its Creator. It is glorious, even in the angels, to serve the God of glory; and what is there above this for a creature to aspire to, that its nature is capable of? Those among the angels who, as it seems, attempted somewhat farther, somewhat higher, attained nothing but endless ruin, shame, and misery. Men are ready to fancy strange things about the glory of angels; and little consider that all the difference in glory, in any part of God's creation, lies merely in willingness, ability, and readiness to serve God their Creator. And, doubtless, the works wherein God employs them in subserviency to his providence, as the messengers of judgment or of mercy, are in an especial manner, glorious works. And they discharge their service in a very glorious manner; with great power, wisdom, and

uncontrolable efficacy. Thus one of them slew “a hundred and fourscore and five thousand” of the enemies of God in one night. And of like power and expedition are they in all their services; in all things to the utmost capacity of creatures answering the will of God. Now if this be the great glory of angels, and we poor worms of the earth are invited, as indeed we are, into a participation with them therein, what unspeakable folly will it be in us, if we be found negligent! Our future glory consists in this, that we shall be made like unto the angels; and our way towards it is to do the will of our Father on earth, as it is done by them in heaven. Oh! in how many vanities doth vain man place his glory! nothing so shameful that one or other hath not gloried in; whilst the true and only glory of “doing the will of God,” is neglected by almost all.

VERSES 8, 9.

*But unto the Son, he saith: Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.*

§1. Connexion of the words. §2. The Messiah intended by the psalmist! §3. What the apostle's design. §4. (I.) The words explained. Christ called God because so by nature. §5. His throne. §6. Its perpetuity. §7. His sceptre. §8. His disposition. §9. His unction. §10. His superior prerogative therein. §11—13. (II.) Observations.

§1. **H**AVING given an account of what the scripture teaches and testifieth concerning angels, in the following verses he sheweth how much more glorious things are spoken of the Son, by whom God revealed his will in the gospel. This testimony is produced by the apostle in answer to that foregoing concerning angels. Those words, saith he, were spoken by the Holy Ghost of the angels, wherein their office and employ-

ment under the providence of God is described; these are spoken by the same Spirit of or to the Son, denoting his prior existence to the prophecies themselves.

§2. There is little or no difficulty to prove that this testimony, Psal. xlv, 6, 7, belongs properly to the Messiah. The ancient Jews granted it, and the present doctors cannot deny it. The Targum wholly applies it to the Messiah; nor is there scarce any thing in the psalm that can with propriety of speech be applied to Solomon. Two things are especially insisted on in the former part of the psalm; the righteousness of the person spoken of, in all his ways and administrations; and the perpetuity of his kingdom. How the former of these can be attributed to him, whose transgressions and sins were so public and notorious; or the latter to him who reigned but forty years, and then left his kingdom, broken and divided, to a wicked foolish son, is hard to conceive. As all, then, grant that the Messiah is principally, so there is no cogent reason to prove that he is not solely, intended in the psalm. I will not contend, but that sundry things treated of in it might be obscurely typified in the kingdom and magnificence of Solomon; yet it is certain, that most of the things mentioned, do so immediately and directly belong to the Lord Messiah, as that they can in no sense be applied to the person of Solomon; and such are the words here produced by our apostle.

§3. We must then, in the next place, consider what it is that the apostle pretends to prove by this testimony, whereby we shall discover its suitableness to his design. Now this is not, as some have supposed, the Deity of Christ, although the testimonies produced do eminently mention his Divine nature, but that whom they saw for a time made lower than the angels, chap. ii, 10, was yet in his whole person so far above them,

as that he had power to alter and change those institutions which were given out by the ministry of angels. And this he doth, undeniably, by the testimonies alleged. For whereas the scripture testifies concerning angels, that they are all servants, and that their chief glory consists in the discharge of their duty in that relation, to him are ascribed a throne, rule, and everlasting dominion, administered with glory, power, and righteousness: whence it is evident that he is exceedingly exalted above them, as a king on his throne is above the servants that attend him to perform his pleasure. Let us,

I. Explain the several parts of the words, and then way will be made for,

II. The observations.

§4. (I.) The first thing to be attended to is the explanation of the words,

“Thy throne, O God.” Some would have *Elohim*, ( $\delta$  Θεός) to be a name common to God with angels, and judges; and in that large acceptation to be here ascribed to Christ; so that though he be expressly called *Elohim*, and ( $\delta$  Θεός) *God*, yet that proves him not to be God by nature, but only to be so termed in respect of his office, dignity, and authority. But this gloss is contrary to the perpetual use of sacred scripture; for no one place can be instanced in, where the name *Elohim* is used absolutely, and restrained to any one person, wherein it doth not undeniably denote the true and only God. Magistrates, indeed, are said to be *Elohim*, in respect of their office, but no one magistrate was ever so called: nor can a man say without blasphemy to any of them, “Thou art *Elohim*,” or God. It is Christ the Son, therefore, that is spoken to, and denoted by that name, as being the true God by nature; though what is here affirmed of him be not as God, but as the king of his

church and people; as in another place, God is said to redeem his church with his own blood.

§5. Among the *insignia regalia*, the royal ensigns of the Messiah's kingdom, is his "throne." A throne strictly is the seat of a king in his kingdom, and is frequently used metonymically for the kingdom itself. Nor does it here simply denote the kingdom of Christ, or his supreme rule and dominion, but the glory also of his kingdom; being on his throne, is to be in the height of his glory, and because God manifests his glory in heaven, he calls that his throne, as the earth is his footstool, Isaiah lxvi, 1. So that the throne of Christ is his glorious kingdom, elsewhere expressed by his sitting down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

§6. To this throne eternity is attributed; it is "for ever and ever." The throne of Christ is said to be "for ever," in opposition to the frail and mutable kingdoms of the earth. "Of the increase of his government and peace, there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth and for ever," Isaiah ix, 7. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. It shall neither decay of itself, nor fail through the opposition of its enemies: for "he must reign until all his enemies are made his footstool," 1 Cor. xv, 24—27. It is also intimated that the Divine nature of Christ is what gives eternity, stability, and unchangeableness to his throne and kingdom. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever."

§7. The "sceptre of righteousness," denotes both the laws of the kingdom and the efficacy of the government. So that what we call a righteous government, is here called "a sceptre of righteousness." The

kingdom of Christ is “a sceptre of righteousness,” because all the laws of his gospel are righteous, holy, and just; full of benignity and truth, Titus ii, 11, 12. And all his administration of grace, mercy, justice, rewards and punishments.

§8. The habitual frame of the heart of Christ, in his legal administrations, is next described: “He loveth righteousness and hateth iniquity.” This shews the absolute completeness of the righteousness of Christ’s kingdom, and of his righteousness in his kingdom. Among the governments of this world, oft-times the very laws are tyrannical, unjust, and oppressive; and if the laws are good and equal, yet oft-times their administration is unjust, partial, and wicked; or when men do abstain from such exorbitances, yet frequently they do so on account of some self-interest and advantage like Jehu, and not out of a constant, equal, unchangeable love of righteousness, and hatred of iniquity; but all these are absolutely complete in the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

§9. The consequence of this righteous rule in Christ is, his being “anointed with oil of gladness.” “God, thy God hath anointed thee.” God is said to be the God of the Son, in respect of his whole person, God-man, as he was designed by his Father to be the head and king of the church; for therein did God the Father undertake to be with him, to stand by him, to carry him through with his work, and in the end to crown him with glory. “Thy God *hath anointed thee with oil of gladness.*” These words may allude, either to the common use of anointing with oil, which was to make the countenance appear cheerful at feasts and public solemnities; or, to the special use of it in the unction of kings, priests, and prophets. That the ceremony was typical, is evident; and it denoted the

collation of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, whereby the person anointed was enabled for the discharge of the office he was called to, Iſaiah lxi, 1. And in this sense there is commonly assigned a threefold unction of Christ; at his conception, at his baptism, and at his ascension, when he received from the Father the promise of the Spirit, to be poured forth upon his disciples, Acts ii, 33. But that which the apostle seems here to express with the psalmist, is the glorious exaltation of Christ, when he was solemnly enstated in his kingdom: this is that which is called the making of him both Lord and Christ, Acts ii, 36. When God raised him from the dead, and gave him glory, 1 Pet. i, 21. He is called "Christ" from the unction of the Spirit; and in his exaltation, he is said, in an especial manner, to be "made Christ;" that is, taken gloriously into the possession of all the offices and their full administration, whereunto he was so anointed. "The oil of gladness," denotes triumph and exaltation, freedom from trouble and distress.

§10. Finally, we have the prerogative of Christ in this privilege; "He is anointed above his fellows." Now these fellows, companions, or associates, may denote, either all believers, partaking with him in this unction, who are co-heirs with him; or, more especially those who were employed by God in the service and rule of his church; such as the prophets of old, and afterwards the apostles, Ephes. ii, 20. With respect to both these, Christ is anointed with oil of gladness "above them," but the latter sort are especially intended; concerning whom the apostle gives an especial instance in Moses, chap. iii. In a word, he is incomprehensibly exalted above angels and men.

§11. (II.) Let us now advert to such observations as the words naturally afford.

*Obs.* 1. The comparing of scripture with scripture is an excellent means of becoming acquainted with the mind and will of God therein. Thus the apostle compareth what is spoken of angels in one place, and what of the Son in another, and from thence manifesteth what is the mind of God concerning them. And this discovers the root of almost all the errors and heresies that are in the world. Men whose hearts are not subdued by faith and humility to the obedience of the truth, lighting on some expression in scripture, that singly considered seems to give countenance to some such opinion as they are willing to embrace; without farther search, they fix it on their minds and magnify the importance of it in their imagination. Hence it appears what diligence, patience, and wisdom are required of all in searching the sacred oracles, who desire an accurate and profitable knowledge of the truth. And as to those who openly and habitually neglect the inestimable privilege of this word, as the infallible guide to all useful and saving truths, how wofully will it raise up in judgment against them! And how great will be their misery, who, under various pretences subservient to their own corrupt ends, deter others from the study of it!

§12. *Obs.* 2. It is the duty of all believers to rejoice in the glory, honor, and dominion of Jesus Christ. The church (in the xlvth Psalm) takes by faith a prospect at a great distance of his coming and glory; and then breaks out with exultation and triumph, into these words, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever." And if this was a matter of so great joy and transport to them, who had only an obscure representation of the glory which was to follow many ages after, what ought the full accomplishment, and clear manifestation of it be to us! This made them of old "rejoice with



joy unspeakable and full of glory," even because they saw and heard the things which kings, wise men, and prophets desired to see, and saw them not; "God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect," chap. xi, 40. Herein is God glorified; herein doth the honor and glory of Christ as mediator consist; and shall not this be a matter of great rejoicing to all that love him in sincerity? That he who loved us, that gave himself for us, that underwent every thing reproachable or miserable for our sakes; that he is now exalted, glorified, enthroned in an everlasting immoveable kingdom, above all his enemies, and secure from all opposition; this, surely, is a matter of inexpressible joy. Our own security and safety, present and future happiness, being deeply interested therein. Whilst he reigneth we are safe; and are sure to be in our never-failing way to glory. To see by faith this king in his beauty, upon his throne, high and lifted up, and his train filling the temple, to see all power committed to him, all things given into his hands, disposing of all, and ruling all, for the advantage of his church, how exhilarating, how joyful the prospect! The whole world, all the creation of God, are concerned in this kingdom of Christ. Setting aside his enemies under the curse in hell, the whole creation is benefited by this mediatorial dominion: for as some men are made partakers of saving grace and salvation thereby, so the residue of that race receive unspeakable advantages in the patience and forbearance of God; and the very creature itself is raised, as it were, into an expectation thereby of deliverance from that state of vanity whereunto it is now subjected, Rom. viii, 20, 21. So that if we are capable of being moved with the glory of God, the honor of Jesus Christ, our own eternal

interest, with the advantage of the whole creation; have we not cause to rejoice in this throne and kingdom of the Son?

§13. *Obs.* 3. All the laws, and the whole administration of the kingdom of Christ, by his word and spirit, are equal, righteous, and holy. His sceptre is a sceptre of righteousness. The world, indeed, likes them not; all things in his rule seem to it weak, absurd, and foolish: 1 Cor. i, 20, 21; but, the Holy Ghost being judge, they are otherwise; and such they appear to them that believe; yea, whatever is requisite to make laws and administrations "righteous" here concur. Is authority, a just and full authority, requisite to make laws righteous? He has it supremely. Is wisdom, the eye of authority, so requisite that no legislator ever obtained just renown without it? The Lord Christ is abundantly furnished with wisdom for this purpose. He is the foundation-stone of the church, that hath "seven eyes upon it," Zech. iii, 9. A perfection of wisdom and understanding in all its affairs. But it deserves particular attention, that his laws are righteous in such a sense as to be easy, gentle, and not burdensome. The righteousness and uprightness here intended doth not denote strict, rigid, severe justice, extending itself to the utmost of what can be required of the subjects; but equity mixed with gentleness, tenderness, and condescension; "His yoke is easy and his burden light," Matt. xi, 30; and "his commandments are not grievous," 1 John v, 3. His commands are all reasonable, suited to the principles of that natural obedience we owe to God; and so not grievous to any thing in us, but that principle of sin and darkness which is to be destroyed. He hath not multiplied precepts merely arbitrary, to express his authority; as might be evinced by the particular consideration of his insti-

tutions. Hence our obedience to them is called our "reasonable service," Rom. xii, 1. His commands are easy, because all of them are suited to that principle of the new nature, which he worketh in the hearts of all his genuine disciples. This principle likes them, loves them, delights in them, which makes them easy. His commands are easy, because he continually gives out supplies of his spirit, to make his subjects yield obedience to them. That is it which above all sets a lustre upon his rule. This administration of Christ's kingdom is righteous, because useful and profitable; freeing the soul from the power of lust, the service of sin, the fear of death, hell, and the world; guiding it in the truth, making it fruitful amongst men, and amiable to God himself. How righteous also their end! A more worthy and exalted cannot be conceived. Hence it appears, that our submission to this sceptre, and our obedience to these laws, must needs be very righteous and reasonable. What can be farther desired to provoke us to it? On the other hand, does it not awfully follow, that the condemnation of those who refuse the reign of Christ over them, that will not yield obedience to his laws, is most just and righteous? How will the equity of his government stop the mouth of every rebel for ever, when he comes to deal with them who know not God, and obey not the gospel?

## VERSES 10—12.

*And thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thine hands. They shall perish, but thou remainest: and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: But thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.*

§1—4. Erroneous interpretations refuted. §5—7. (I.) The words explained.  
§8—10. (II.) Practical observations,

§1. **I**N these verses, the apostle by another illustrious testimony, (taken out of Psalm cii,) confirms his principal assertion. There is no question but that these words do sufficiently prove the pre-eminence of him of whom they are spoken, incomparably above all creatures whatever. Some say that the words are only accommodated to Christ, “thou hast laid the foundation of the earth,” that is, “the world was made for thy sake.” But this interpretation, or rather violent detortion of the words destroys itself. For if they are spoken of God absolutely, and not of the Messiah to whom they are accommodated, how can it be said that the “world was made for his sake,” and not by him? Both senses of the words cannot be true. But this is, indeed, plainly to deny the authority of the apostle.

§2. The Socinians, who cannot deny but that these words some way or other belong to Christ, yet plainly perceiving that if they are wholly understood of him, there is an end of all their religion, fix here upon a new and peculiar evasion. Some words of this testimony, say they, belong to Christ, (so much they will yield to the authority of the apostle) but not all of them, “These words,” they urge, “being first expressly spoken of God, and here referred to Christ, we must consider what in them is agreeable to the nature and condi-

tion of Christ, who certainly was a man." But this is meanly to beg the question, "That Christ was a mere man, and not God by nature." It is true, as here granted, that the words were first expressly spoken of God; but it is no less true, the apostle being judge, that it is the Son of God who is that God. It is true also, that he was man, and nothing is ascribed to him but what belongs to him who was man, but not as he was man. And such was the creation of heaven and earth. By this testimony, then, the Holy Ghost proves, that he who was "made less for a little while than the angels," in one respect, was absolutely and in his whole person infinitely above them, as being the Creator of heaven and earth.

§3. There is another specious cavil that has been sometimes urged to this effect: "The Hebrews were either persuaded that Christ was God, the Creator of heaven and earth, or they were not; if they were, what need of all these arguments and testimonies? one plain word might have sufficed. If they did not yet believe it, why does he take for granted what, if directly urged, that he was the Maker of heaven and earth, would have put all out of doubt." We reply; let it be granted that they did expressly believe Christ to be God; have believers no need to have their faith confirmed by testimonies out of the word, that may not so readily occur to themselves? Have they no need to be strengthened in their faith, especially in such points as were in those days greatly opposed, as was this of the eternal glory of the Messiah; concerning which the believing Hebrews had to do with learned and stubborn adversaries continually. And if the apostle might have ended the whole controversy, as these objectors pretend, by plainly affirming, that he was "the Creator of all things," and that the angels re

his creatures; we retort, might he not as well have ended the dispute about "his pre-eminence above angels," which it is allowed he here designs to prove, with "one word," without citing so many testimonies to prove it? But would he then have unfolded the mysteries of the Old Testament to the Hebrews, which was his grand design? Would he then have manifested that he taught nothing but what was before revealed (though obscurely) to Moses and the prophets, which he assiduously aimed to do, thereby to strengthen and confirm believers and convince gainsayers? Again, suppose some of them to whom he wrote did not yet expressly believe the Deity of Christ, (as the apostles themselves did not for awhile believe his resurrection;) could any more convincing way be fixed on to persuade them thereto, than by minding them of those testimonies of the Old Testament, wherein the attributes and works of God are ascribed to him? But unto the Son, he saith, "thy throne, O God, is for ever; and, thou hast laid the foundation of the earth."

§4. Were it affirmed in this place only, that "Christ made all things," yet the words being plain and evident, and the thing itself agreeable to scripture in other places, and not repugnant to any one sacred testimony, there is no pretence for any, who truly reverence the wisdom and authority of inspiration, to deny the words to be spoken of him properly and directly. If not, will there be any thing left that we can call a sacred and unshaken basis of faith in all the sacred volume? Besides, we have shewed already the vanity of that distinction of God's making things by Christ, as though it denoted any subordination in casuality; nor will the Socinians themselves admit of any such thing, but confute that notion in the Arians. But this is not the only place wherein it is affirmed that Christ made all

things that are in the heaven and the earth. John i, 1, 2; Col. i, 16; &c. To suppose that in these sentences, "thou hath laid the foundation of the earth," and, "thou shalt fold them up as a garment," one person is understood in the former, and another in the latter, no such thing being intimated by the psalmist or the apostle, is to suppose what we please, that we may establish what we have a mind. One person, and only one, is here certainly and only spoken to; if this be the Father, the words concern not Christ at all, and the apostle was deceived in his allegation of them: if the Son, the whole is spoken of him, as the apostle affirms. Can any shew of reason be assigned, why the latter words should be attributed to Christ, and not the former? If it be said, because God by him shall destroy the world, which is the thing in the last words spoken of; we ask, where is it written that God shall destroy the world by Christ? If they say in this place; I say then Christ is spoken of in this place: and if so, he is spoken of in the first words, "And thou, Lord," or not at all: besides, to whom do those closing words belong, but to these, "Thou art the same, and thy years fail not?" If these words are spoken of Christ, it is evident that all the foregoing must be so also; for his enduring, and the not failing of his years; that is, his eternity, is opposed to the creation and temporary duration of the world. If they say, that they belong to the Father primarily, but are attributed to Christ, because the Father doth it by him; I desire to know, what is the meaning of these words, "Thou art the same by Christ?" and "Thy years fail not by Christ?" What! is not the Father eternal, except in the man Christ Jesus? He who made them, is said to fold them up. Who then can but believe, on this testimony of the apostle, that Christ the Lord made heaven and earth, and if the

apostle intended not to assert it, what is there in the text, or near it, to warn men from running on a shelf, where so fair an harbor appears to them? From all that has been said, it is evident, that the whole testimony belongs to Christ, and is by the apostle expressly applied to him.

§5. (I.) Proceed we now to the interpretation of the words, "Thou hast laid the foundation of the earth." In considering the works of God, to admire his greatness, power, and wisdom in them, or to set forth his praises for them, it is usual in scripture to distribute them into parts. So, for instance, the psalmist does when surveying the works of God's providence in bringing the children of Israel out of Egypt, Psalm cxxxvi, and subjoins this inference of praise to every one of them, "for his mercy endureth for ever," and so he does with respect to the works of creation, Psalm xix. In the passage under consideration, the earth is said to be "founded," because of its stability and immoveableness. He set it fast, he established it, that it should not be moved for ever. The whole fabric of heaven and earth is compared to an edifice or building; whereof the earth, as the lowest and most depressed part, is, as it were, the foundation of the whole; but the stability, immoveableness, and firmness of it is what the word denotes, and what is here most properly intended. "And the heavens are the works of thy hands." This alludes to the curious framing and garnishing of the visible heavens. The (שפירה, Job xxvi, 13;) exquisite beautifulness and ornament of the heavens, is what the psalmist aims to express. "The heavens are the works of thy hands;" that which thy hands, thy power, joined with infinite wisdom, have framed, so as to set off, and give lustre and beauty to the whole fabric; as a master workman doth the up-



per and most noble parts of his building. Thus the founding of the earth, and garnishing of the heavens, is the first thing assigned to the Lord Redeemer in this testimony of his glory.

§6. The next part of the testimony is not less illustrious and decisive. The mutation or abolition of these things is no less an effect of infinite power than the former; yet this is ascribed to the Lord Christ, "They shall perish, and they shall all wax old as doth a garment: and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed." Whatever the change be, he compares the things to be changed to a garment no more to be used, or at least not to be used in the same manner as it was before; and the work itself to the folding up of such a garment; intimating the greatness of him by whom this work shall be performed, and the facility with which he does it. The whole creation is as a garment; wherein the Great Supreme shews his power to men, as it were clothed. Whence he is said to clothe himself with light as with a garment; and in it is the hiding of his power: it is hid as a man is hid with a garment; not that he should not be seen at all, but that he should not be seen perfectly, and as he is; it shews the man and he is known by it, but also it hides him that he is not perfectly or fully seen. So are the works of creation with respect to God: he so far makes them his garment or clothing, as in them to give us some notices of his power and wisdom: but he is also hid in them, in that by them no creatures can come to the full and perfect knowledge of him. Now when this work shall cease, and God shall uncloth or unveil all his glory to his saints, and they shall know him perfectly, see him as he is, so far as a created nature is capable, then will he lay them aside, at least as to that use, and fold them up with as

much ease as a man lays aside his garment that he will wear or use no more.

§7. On this assertion the apostle insinuates a comparison between this glorious fabric of heaven and earth and him that made them, as to durableness and stability; "They shall perish, and wax old as doth a garment." By their perishing most understand their being changed from their present condition and use; others, their utter abolition. And, to say the truth, it is hardly supposable that an alteration only, and that for the better, should be thus expressed; that word (*απολουναι*) being always used in the worst sense, for a perishing by a total destruction. Their "waxing old as a garment" is their tendency to this condition, and may denote the gradual decay of the heavens and earth as to their worth and use; and a near approximation to their final period. In this sense our apostle affirms, that the dispensation of the covenant, which established the Judaical worship and ceremonies, waxed old and decayed, chap. viii, 13; not that it had lost any of its first vigor and efficacy before its abolition. And it may be, that it shall be with these heavens and earth at the last day, as it was with the heavens and the earth of Judaical institutions; (for so are they frequently called, especially when their dissolution or abolition is spoken of) for though the use of them, and their power of obliging, was taken away and abolished, yet are they kept in the world as venerable monuments of the goodness and wisdom of God in teaching his church of old. So may it be with the heavens and earth of the old creation; though they shall be laid aside at the last day from their use, yet may they be preserved as everlasting monuments of Divine power and wisdom. In opposition to this it is said of Christ, "Thou remainest, thou art the same, and thy

years shall not fail," both expressions intending his eternal and absolutely immutable existence. Eternity is not improperly called (*nunc stans*) a *present existence*, with respect to which nothing is past or future: it being always wholly present. "Thy years fail not." He who is the same eternally, hath properly no years, which are a measure of transient time denoting its duration, its beginning and end.

§8. (II.) Hence we may with great propriety make the two following observations:

*Obs. 1.* All the properties of God, considered in the person of the Son, the head of the church, are suited to give relief and consolation to believers in all their distresses. This truth presents itself to us from the use of the words in the psalm from which they are taken. The psalmist under the consideration of his own frailty and mortality, relieves himself with the thoughts of the omnipotence and eternity of the Divine Redeemer. Man was so created at first as that every thing in God was suited to be his reward and satisfaction; but this being wholly lost by sin, and the whole representation of God to man becoming full of dread and terror, all gracious intercourse in special love on the part of God, and all spiritual obedience on the part of man, were inevitably intercepted. But again God designing to take sinners into communion with himself, in their love and obedience, it must be by representing unto them his blessed properties, as suited to their encouragement, satisfaction, and reward, which he does in Christ. And without such a representation in him no rational ground of communion is conceivable.

§9. *Obs. 2.* The old creation, even the most glorious parts of it, hastening to its period, at least with regard to its present use, calls upon us not to fix

our hearts on the small perishing shares which we have therein, especially since we have him who is omnipotent and eternal for our inheritance. The figure or fashion of this world, its present lovely appearance, the apostle tells us, is passing away, is hastening to its period; it is a fading, dying thing, and therefore can yield us no true satisfaction. Such is the frailty of the nature of man, and such the perishing condition of all created things, that none can ever obtain the least stable consolation, but what ariseth from an interest in the omnipotency, sovereignty, and eternity of the Lord Christ. Where shall man, this poor creature so frail in itself, in its actings, in its enjoyments, seek for rest, and satisfaction? In this alone, that "the word of the Lord abides for ever;" the Lord Jesus Christ as preached in the gospel.

§10. Man was made for eternity. He was not called out of nothing to return to it again. When he once is, he is for ever. God made him for his eternal glory, and gave him therefore a subsistence without end. He is conscious of this condition. Men find a witness in themselves, somewhat assures them of an after-reckoning, and that the things they now do will be called over in another world. Hence the children of men out of Christ are exposed to a twofold trouble and perplexity; for their eternal subsistence, as to the enjoyment of good or bad, depends upon their present life which is frail, fading, and perishing: and yet no perishing thing will afford them relief or support in this condition. And indeed how should it? They and these are parting every moment, and that for eternity. And what comfort is there in a perpetual taking leave of things that are beloved? Yet such is the life of man, every one must allow, as to all earthly enjoyments. It is but a parting with what a man hath; and the lon-

ger he is about it, the more trouble he hath with it. Created enjoyments will not continue our lives here, because of *our* frailty; they will not accompany us into eternity, because of their *own* frailty; we change and they change; we are vanity and they are no better. But an interest in the omnipotency, sovereignty, and eternity of the Lord Christ, will yield a soul relief and satisfaction even in this condition; having that in them, which is suited to relieve us under our present frailty, and to give us satisfaction during our future everlasting existence. In Christ we have stability and unchangeableness: though we die, yet he dieth not; and "because he liveth we shall live also." But Oh! the misery of those who have no interest in him; and have therefore nothing to console themselves with against the evils of any condition. All their hopes are in this life, and from its flattering but delusive enjoyments; when these are once past, they will be eternally, and universally miserable; miserable beyond our expression or their own apprehension. And what is this life? a vapor that appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth away. What are the enjoyments of this life? dying, perishing things; and, with respect tot hem, fuel to lust, and so to hell. Surely the contentment that a dying man can take in dying things is very contemptible in itself, and an awful indication of everlasting disappointment.

## VERSE 13.

*But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.*

§1. Introduction. §2-5. The words explained. §6-9. (I.) Who are the enemies of Christ, and how they are to be made his footstool. §10, 11. (II.) By whom they shall be so made. §12, 13. Inferences.

§1. **T**HE usefulness of this testimony for confirming the dignity and authority of the Messiah, appears by the frequent quotation of it in the New Testament. See particularly Matt. xxii, 44.

In the interrogation, a vehement negation is included; he said not at any time to any of the angels: he never spake these words or the like concerning them; there is no testimony to that purpose recorded in the whole book of God, the only means of such knowledge, and rule of our faith, in such things. The manner of the expression puts an emphasis on the denial; and he makes application of this testimony to every angel in heaven, severally considered. For whereas he had before sufficiently proved the pre-eminence of the Messiah above the angels in general; to obviate any remaining objection that might be left in reserve, he applies the present testimony to every one of them singly and individually. "Unto which of the angels said he at any time?" That the testimony itself clearly proves the intendment of the apostle, provided the words are justly applied, (and surely no Christian will deny that) is beyond all exception. For they contain an eulogium, an assignation of honor and glory, beyond whatever was or can be ascribed to any angel whatever.

§2. "The Lord said unto my Lord." In the Greek both the person speaking and the person spoken to, are expressed by the same name, (*Κυριος*) *Lord*; but in the

Hebrew they have different denominations. The person speaking is Jehovah, that is, God the Father; for though this name be often used where the Son is distinctly spoken of, yet where Jehovah speaketh to the Son, or of him, as here, it is the person of the Father that is denoted. The person spoken to therefore is the Son; (אֲדֹנָי) the *Lord*, David's *Lord*. In respect of his Divine nature, being of the same essence, power, and glory, with the Father, he is, absolutely considered, capable of no subordination or exaltation; yet, economically, the eternal Son of God humbled himself, and emptied himself of this glory, Phil. ii, 7, 8; not properly by parting with it, but by the assumption of human nature into personal union with himself; being thus made flesh, John i, 14; wherein his eternal glory was clouded for a season, John xviii, 5; and his person humbled to the discharge of those mediatorial acts which were to be performed in the human nature, Phil. ii, 9, 10. But we must carefully observe, that the person of Christ is here addressed, not in respect of his Divine nature only, which is not capable of exaltation or glory by way of free donation; nor in respect of his human nature only, which does not constitute exclusively the king and head of the church; but with respect to his whole person complexly, wherein the Divine nature, exerting its power and glory with the understanding and will of the human nature, is the principle of those acts, whereby Christ ruleth over all in the kingdom given him of his Father, Rev. i, 17, 18; as he was God, he was David's *Lord*, but not his son; as he was man, he was David's son, and so absolutely could not be his Lord. In his person God-man he was his Lord and his son: which is the import of our Savior's question; Matt. xxii, 4.

§3. The nature of this speaking, or when God said it, seems to intend, the original decree of God concerning the exaltation of the Son incarnate. So David calls this word the decree, the statute or eternal appointment of God, Psalm ii, 7; the eternal covenant between the Father and the Son concerning the work of mediation. The declaration of this decree and covenant in the prophecies and promises given out concerning their accomplishment and execution from the foundation of the world, Luke i, 40; 1 Pet. i, 11, 12; Gen. iii, 15. "He said it by the mouth of his holy prophets which have been since the world began." The actual accomplishment of them all, when upon the resurrection of Christ, and the fulfilling of his work of humiliation, God actually invested him with the promised glory.

§4. Hence the manner of expression, "Sit thou at my right hand." It has the force of a promise, having a respect to the decree, covenant, and declaration thereof from the foundation of the world; and God engaging his faithfulness and power to it in the appointed season, speaks concerning it as a thing instantly to be done. And as those words respect the glorious accomplishment of the thing itself, so they denote the acquiescence of God in the work of Christ, and his authority in his glorious exaltation. The "sitting at the right hand of God," hath been explained before, verse 3. In brief, it is the exaltation of Christ into the glorious administration of the kingdom granted him, with honor, security, and power; or in one word, as our apostle expresses it, 'his reigning,' 1 Cor. xv, 25, "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet."

§5. There is in the words the end aimed at in this sitting down at the right hand of God, and that is, the



“making of his enemies his footstool.” This is promised him as the exalted Savior and Sovereign. For the opening of these words we must inquire,

I. Who are these enemies of Christ, and how they are to be made his footstool. And,

II. By whom.

§6 (I.) We have already shewn, that it is the glorious exaltation of Christ in his kingdom that is here spoken of; and therefore the enemies intended must be the enemies of his kingdom, or rather enemies to him in his kingdom. Now the kingdom of Christ may be considered either in respect of the internal spiritual power and efficacy of it, in the hearts of his subjects; or, with respect to the outward glorious administration of it in the world; and in both these respects it hath enemies in abundance; all and every one of which must be made his footstool. We shall consider them apart. The kingdom or reigning of Christ, in the first sense, consists in his authority and power, which he employs for the conversion, sanctification, and salvation of his elect. As he is their king he quickens them by his spirit, sanctifies them by his grace, preserves them by his faithfulness, raiseth them from the dead at the last day by his power, and gloriously rewardeth them in his righteousness to all eternity.

§7. In this work the great Messiah has many enemies; sin, Satan, the world, death, the grave, and hell: all these are enemies to the work and kingdom of Christ, and consequently to his person, as having undertaken that work. Sin is universally and in its whole nature his enemy; hence it is, that sinners and enemies are the same, Rom. v, 8, 10. It is that which makes a special, direct, and immediate opposition to the quickening, sanctifying, and saving of his people. Sa-

tan is the sworn enemy of Christ; the adversary that openly, constantly, and avowedly opposeth him in his throne. And he exerts his enmity by temptations, accusations, and persecutions, all which are the work of an enemy. The world is also a professed enemy of the kingdom of Christ, John xv, 18. The things of it, as under the curse and subject to vanity, are suited to alienate the hearts of men from Christ, and so to act as enemies against him. The men of the world act the same part; by their examples, their temptations, their reproaches, their persecutions, or by their allurements, they make it their business to oppose the Messiah's kingdom. Death is also an enemy, and so it is expressly called, 1 Cor. xv, 26, for it comes to execute the first curse and judicial sentence even upon believers. The grave also is an adversary; it fights against the faith of the subjects of Christ, by reducing their mortality into corruption, and holding fast the dead until they are powerfully rescued from the jaws of it. Finally: Hell is that enemy in a subordination to which all these others act. They all bring men into hell; which is an eternal enemy where it prevails. This attends the workings of those other adversaries to consume and destroy, if it were possible, the whole inheritance of Christ, Rev. vi, 8. All these, we may justly say, are enemies to the Redeemer in his work and kingdom, with whatever contributes to their assistance, in pursuit of their enmity.

§8. Now all these enemies, as far as they oppose the spiritual and eternal advancement of the work of Christ, must be made "the footstool of his feet." The expression is metaphorical, and is to be interpreted and applied variously, according to the nature and condition of the enemies with whom he has to do. The allusion, in general, is taken from what was done by

Joshua his type, towards the enemies of his people, Joshua x, 24. To shew the ruin of their power and his absolute prevalency against them, he caused the people to set their feet upon their necks; see 2 Samuel xxii, 39; Psalm viii, 6. To have his enemies then brought "under his feet," is to have an absolute and complete conquest over them; and their being made "his footstool," their perpetual and unchangeable duration in that condition, under the weight of whatever burden he shall be pleased to lay upon them. And this is accomplished in various respects:

1. *Meritoriously*: by his death and blood-shedding he hath procured the sentence of condemnation to be pronounced against them; so that their right to exert their enmity against him, or his, no more exists. He hath given them all their death wounds, and leaves them to die at his pleasure.

2. *Exemplary*: all these adversaries exercised, in a peculiar manner, their enmity against him, and tried all their strength. Now he absolutely conquered all them in his own person; and in his own person hath he set an example of what shall be done in behalf of the whole church.

3. *Efficiently*: when he unites any to himself, he begins the conquest of all his enemies, giving them a right to the complete, total, and final victory over them all. He gradually carries them on towards perfection, treading down their enemies under them. When having freed them from the law, and sin, trodden down Satan, prevailed against the world, recovered them from death, rescued them from the grave, and delivered them from hell, he shall be himself perfectly victorious in them, and they made complete sharers in his victory.

§9. The kingdom of Christ, in the next place, (see §6) may be considered with respect to the external administration of it in this world; which also, with the opposition made to it, is intended in this passage. God the Father, in the exaltation of Jesus Christ, hath given to him "all nations for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession," Ps. ii, 8. Upon this grant a right ensued, to call, gather, and erect his church, in any nation or part of the world; to give to it his laws and ordinances of worship. Also a right and authority to dispose of all nations and persons, for the good and advantage of his kingdom. Now in pursuit of his asserting this grant and right, great opposition is made to him by all sorts of persons, instigated thereunto by Satan. The world understands not his right, hates his government, and would not have him to reign: but hitherto his kingdom and interest in the world hath been maintained against all their enmity and opposition, and themselves brought to destruction one after another; so by virtue of this promise he shall reign in security and glory, until all their hearts be broken, their strength ruined, and themselves brought "under his feet." Now,

§10. (II.) We are to consider by whom these enemies of Christ shall be made thus his footstool: "I will make them," saith God the Father. It is not the work of Christ himself, to subdue and conquer his enemies: Is it not said that he shall do so? We reply; that work which is immediately wrought by the Son, may, as here, by way of eminency be ascribed to the Father. Power and authority to subdue and conquer his enemies, is given to the Lord Christ by the Father as a reward; it is therefore said to be his work, because the authority for it is from him, see Isaiah iii, 12. Besides, the work of subduing enemies is itself a work of power

and authority. Now in the economy of the blessed Trinity, the works of power and authority are peculiarly ascribed to the Father; as those of wisdom are to the Son, who is the eternal wisdom of the Father. And on this account the same works are ascribed to the Father and the Son. But the Son also, considered as mediator, receives and holds his kingdom by grant from his Father, to whom therefore this work of subduing enemies may be ascribed.

§11. The last thing is the limitation of this all conquering work ( $\Upsilon \acute{\epsilon}\omega\varsigma \alpha\nu$ ) *until*; "until I make thine enemies," &c. The Son of God shall continue eternally in the essential and natural dominion he has over all creatures, and they in their dependence upon him and subjection to him. But as to the economical kingdom of Christ over the church, and all other things for its protection and salvation, the immediate ends of it will cease, and all his saints being saved, all his sons brought to glory, all his enemies subdued; the end of that rule, which consisted in the guidance and protection of the one, the restraint and ruin of the other, must necessarily cease. The Lord Jesus, however, shall not so leave his kingdom at the last day, as that the Father should take upon himself the administration of it. Upon the giving up of the kingdom, whatever it be, the apostle doth not say, the Father shall rule, or reign, as though he should exercise the same kingdom; but that "God should be all in all;" that is, God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, without the use or intervention of such ways or means as were in use before, during the full continuance of the dispensatory kingdom of Christ, shall fill and satisfy all his saints, shall support and dispose of the remnant of creation. Moreover: this ceasing of the kingdom of Christ is no way derogatory to his glory, or

the perpetuity of his kingdom; no more than his ceasing to intercede for his people is to the perpetuity of his priesthood, which is confirmed to him by oath. The kingdom of Christ may be said to abide for ever, in that all his saints and angels shall eternally adore and worship him on account of the glory which he hath received as the king and head of the church; and in that all the saints shall abide in their state of union to God, through him as their head. God communicating of his fulness to them in this way, will be the mediator's eternal glory, when all his enemies shall be his footstool. Besides, as the righteous judge of all, he shall continue, and that to all eternity, the punishment of his adversaries.

§12. Hence we may infer the following remarks,

1. The authority of God the Father in the exaltation of Jesus Christ as the head and mediator of the church, is greatly to be regarded by believers. "Sit thou on my right hand." Much of the consolation and security of the church depends on this consideration.

2. The exaltation of Christ is the great pledge of his acceptance as the surety of the church. Now, saith God, "sit thou on my right hand," the work is done wherein my soul is well pleased.

3. Christ hath many enemies to his kingdom; I, saith God, will deal with all of them.

4. The kingdom and rule of Christ is perpetual and abiding, notwithstanding all the opposition that is made against it. His enemies rage, at least sometimes, as though they would pull him out of his throne. Fruitless rage! He hath the faithfulness and power, the word and right hand of Jehovah, for the security of his kingdom.

5. The end to which the Lord Jesus Christ will assuredly bring all his enemies, (tremendous yet delightful thought!) shall be to them miserable and shameful, to the saints happy and joyful, to himself victorious and triumphant. Yes, ruin to enemies, joy to saints, and glory to Christ, will be the momentous issue of all the world's enmity and opposition! They come upon the breadth of the earth, and compass the camp of the saints, and the beloved city, Rev. xx, 9. They go about their work as if they would accomplish it in a day; and what is the issue? The city which they look on as an unwall'd town, no way defensible or tenable, is not yet taken; no, nor never shall be, but they fall before it, one after another, and their bones lie under the walls of the city they oppose. Disappointment, shame, and everlasting punishment is their portion. The people they assail have their habitation in a rock. This pledge we have already, that all who have formerly risen up in enmity to the kingdom of Christ are dead, gone, perished under his feet, and have left their work undone; as far from accomplishment as the first day they undertook it. The same shall be the lot of those that are, and those that follow, to the end of the world. And when they have all done their utmost, then shall the end be; then shall all their misery be completed, the joy of the saints filled, and the glory of Christ everlastingly exalted. Oh! joyful prospect to the oppressed righteous; all the Nimrods of the earth, that have opposed the kingdom of Christ, lying in shame and misery, with their necks under the footstool of his feet! And the like prospect may they take of what is to come; they may by faith see Babylon fallen, the whole conspiracy that is in the world against them and their

Lord disappointed, and all his enemies that shall arise, even to the consummation of all things, brought to ruin! He will not fail to put forth his power in the appointed season; he will bruise them all with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. His glory and honor require it should be so. Here they reproach, blaspheme, despise, and persecute him. But shall they escape and go free? Shall they always prosper? What then would he do to his great name? The glory of Christ indispensably requires that there be a season, a day appointed for the eternal ruin of all his stubborn adversaries. His enemies deserve it to the utmost: so that his justice, as well as his glory, his interest, and people, is concerned in their destruction. And thus whilst God is righteous, and the sceptre of Christ's kingdom a sceptre of righteousness, themselves call aloud for their own destruction.

VERSE 14.

*Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?*

§1. Connexion of the argument. §2—5. The words explained. §6, 7. Observations. §8—14 (I.) Why God uses the ministry of angels. §15—25. (II.) For what special ends. §22. Additional observations.

§1. **T**HE apostle, having proved the pre-eminence of the Son, as mediator of the New Testament, above all the angels, from attributes of honor and glory that are ascribed to him in the scriptures, that he may not appear to argue merely in a negative manner from what is *not said* concerning them, adds, in this last verse, such a description of their natures and office, or work and employment, as shew, that indeed no such thing *can* be rightly affirmed concerned *them*, as he hath before



manifested to be spoken and recorded concerning the Son.

§2. As to their *nature*, they are (*πνευμαλια*) *spiritual substances*; not qualities or natural faculties, as the Sadducees imagined: and as to their *offices*, they are (*πνευμαλια λειτουργικα*) *ministering spirits*. So are they termed, Psalm ciii, 21; “Bless ye the Lord, all ye his hosts: (*Sept. λειτουργικα αυτῶν*) ye ministers of his that do his pleasure.” Now what kind of office or ministry it is that is ascribed to them, the word itself (*שרת*) partly declares, as it signifies to *minister*, principally about *holy* things; and it is performed with honor and ease, as opposed to another word (*עבד*) which is, “to minister with *labor* and burden.” And hence it is, that the church and they make up but one family; Eph. iv, 15; and in it they are all fellow-servants with them that keep the testimony of Jesus, Rev. xxii, 9. The description of this superior part of the family of God is given us, Dan. vii, 10, “Thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him;” Rev. v, 11. So concerning the lower part of it, Deut. xviii, 5. God chose the priests and Levites to minister in the name of the Lord.

§3. As to the execution of their office, they are ministering spirits, (*εις διακονιαν αποσπελλομενα*) “sent out unto a ministry;” *sent out*, that is, they are daily so, continually so; the word denoting the present time, which is perpetual. They stand before the presence of God, and are sent forth, sometimes these, sometimes others, but always those that are sufficient for the destined work. And their work is expressed by two words, which comprise the whole ministry of the church, (*αποστολη*) *apostleship*, and (*διακονια*) *laboring ministry*; and therein the harmony subsisting between both parts.

of the family is still preserved. And as in the service of the church, the ministers thereof do not minister to men, but to the Lord in the behalf of men, Acts xiii, 2; so is it with these spirits also, they are sent out to minister for the good of men, but properly, it is the Lord to whom they minister: his servants they are, not ours, Psalm ciii, 21; rather they are our fellow-servants. As all the servants of a king, though otherwise they greatly differ, agree in this, that they are all servants to the same person.

§4. Their ministry is restricted to the special object of their work and employment; it is “for them that shall be heirs of salvation;” *for them*, for their sakes, for their good, in their behalf, who shall inherit salvation. Heirs they are at present, and hereafter shall inherit, or actually obtain salvation, by virtue of their heirship. This privilege, amongst others innumerable and inexpressibly great, we have by our adoption; being admitted into the family of God, those blessed angels have us under their constant care. It is true, that the ministry of angels is not always absolutely restrained to the church, for they are employed also in the government of the world; yet be it observed, notwithstanding, that even this is ultimately for the church.

§5. But it may be objected, that this their ministry will not clearly evince their inferiority and subordination to Christ, seeing he himself also was sent for the good of them who shall inherit salvation, and is thus called, “the apostle of our profession.” But the difference between him and them, in their being “sent,” is so great and manifest, that his superiority and pre-eminence are not in the least impeached. He was sent by his own previous choice and condescension; they are so, in pursuit of the state and condition of their creation. He was sent to minister, in the form of a

servant, only for a short season, in the days of his flesh; they continue to be so from the beginning to the end of the world. He was sent to the great and mighty work of mediation, which none was worthy to undertake, none able to go through, but himself alone, the only begotten Son of God; they are sent about the ordinary concernments of the saints. He, as the Son; they, as servants. He, as the author of the whole work of the redemption and salvation of the church; they, as subordinate assistants in the particular promotion of it. Hence,

§6. *Obs. 1.* The highest honor of the most glorious spirits in heaven is to minister to the Lord in the service whereunto he appoints them. This is the work of angels, and this is their honor and glory. For what greater honor can a creature be made partaker of, than to be employed in the service of his Creator? What greater glory, than to stand in the presence, and to execute the pleasure, of the King of heaven? If it be an honor on earth to stand before princes, dying, perishing men, who, as to nature and kind, stand on a level with themselves, what must it be for them, who by nature are at an infinite distance from the glorious God, to stand before him? And how inconceivably woful will it be to poor souls at the last day, to find how they despised in this world a share and interest in that service, which is, and ever was, the glory and highest honor of angels!

§7. *Obs. 2.* Such is the love and care of God towards his saints laboring here below, that he sends the most glorious attendants on his throne to minister unto them, and to take care of them. He who gave his only Son for them, will not spare to send his holy angels. Heaven and earth shall be witnesses of his care, and of the value that he puts upon them. Now, this

being a matter of so great importance, as it evidently is, and the doctrine directly taught in the text, we may a little farther inquire,

I. Wherefore God is pleased to use the ministry of angels, in the dispensation of his care and good will to the heirs of salvation, seeing he could, by an almighty facility, produce the same effect by his own immediate power. And,

II. To what special ends and purposes doth God make use of their ministry in behalf of believers.

§8. (I.) As to the first, it is to be resolved principally into his own sovereign wisdom and pleasure. God hath appointed it. Nevertheless, the scripture suggests to us other subordinate reasons; as,

1. God doth it for preserving and manifesting the glorious order of his kingdom. God is pleased to rule his creatures in the character of Supreme Lord and King; and thereby he displays his sovereignty, and makes way for the manifestation of his glory. Now to a kingdom there are three things essential; rule, obedience, and order. In this kingdom, the sovereign rule is in the hand of God alone, the monarchy is his, while obedience is the work and duty of the subjects of his dominion. Now the glory of both these lies in order, to which the ministry of angels eminently contributes.

§9. 2. God is pleased to do this, to exercise the obedience of the angels themselves, and particularly to preserve and rule them in a manner suitable to their state and condition, and that in them he might give an example of ready obedience to the church. These angels of God, being in their nature excellent, and great in power; always ready, watchful, and free from all avocations; eminent in light and holiness, as always beholding the face of God, and filled with his grace,

are proposed to us, in their obedience and readiness to do the will of God, as an example and pattern which we are studiously to imitate: and thence are we directed to pray, that we may “do the will of God on earth as it is done in heaven.”

§10. 3. God employeth them in an especial manner in this ministry, to manifest to the heirs of salvation the greatness and glory of the work of redemption. For as of themselves they desire particularly to look into these things, which in general appear to them so glorious; so, by God’s dealing with his church, in whose behalf they are employed, they learn the manifold wisdom of God, and the riches of his grace, Ephes. iii, 10. And thus, in all their employments about the saints, for whose sake they are sent out to minister, they learn much of the wisdom and love of God, and are thereby excited to honor, glorify, and praise him. Somewhat of this they see in the least and meanest work that is committed to them; and they must needs eternally rejoice in the overflowings of the love and grace of God, taking care of all the concernments of the poorest and meanest of his servants.

§11. 4. This is done, that God may thereby, in an especial manner, give glory and honor to Jesus Christ. This is his will, “that all men should honor the Son as they honor the Father,” John v, 23. He hath therefore raised him, and given him honor and glory; and, in particular, exalted him far above the angels, putting them in subjection to him, as their head, prince, and governor, Ephes. i, 21, 22. Neither is it a shew of glory, or a titular kingdom and dominion, that is given him, but a real sovereignty, wherein all things, subject to him, are at his absolute disposal: and therefore must the angels themselves be at his

service in the affairs of his kingdom, which they acknowledge themselves to be, and the fellow-servants of them that keep his testimony, Rev. xx, 9. Now the heart and love of Jesus Christ is greatly fixed upon that part of his church and people which is laboring with sin, affliction, and persecution here below, Heb. ii, 57; iv, 15. It is then greatly for his honor, that the glorious angels should be employed for the good of all his poor laboring saints. How distinguishing and deserved the honor done to Jesus Christ in heaven, when all the attendants of the throne of God see what care is taken about the meanest that believe in him!

§12. 5. The love, and care, and condescension of God to his saints is hereby manifested to the saints themselves. God employeth the angels for their good, that they may know how he careth for them, and be comforted thereby, Psalm xci, 10—12. The saints of God confess, that they are less than all his mercies, and unworthy that he should have any regard for them, on account of their manifold sins and failings. Of the glorious angels, their thoughts and apprehensions are high and honorable. Their nature, their state and condition, their power and greatness, their holiness and enjoyment of the presence of God, do all present them to their minds as possessed of much excellency and glory, a glory which some have been so weak and superstitious as to adore. Now, when they consider that God is pleased to employ these glorious spirits to watch over them, and to do them good; to encamp round about them, and to keep them from all evil; this fills them with an holy admiration of his infinite love, and unparalleled condescension. They also deservedly admire the excellency and mediation

of the Lord Messiah, who hath brought them into this condition of favor.

§13. 6. Hereby a blessed intercourse and fellowship are maintained between the several parts of the family of God, consisting of angels and men. Now it is the will of God, that for the honor of our Lord Jesus Christ, the immediate head of this family, there should be an intercourse and an helpful communion between the several parts of it; for to this are we brought into the society of the innumerable company of angels, Heb. xii, 22. And because our goodness, our helpfulness, is confined to the saints that are in the earth, Psalm xvi, 3, not extending itself to God, or any of his holy ones above, nor do they stand in need of our aid; hence God employs them about the affairs and concernments of believers, that so a becoming fellowship may be kept up in the family of Christ, which otherwise could have no place.

§14. 7. Perhaps we may add, that God makes use of the ministry of angels, in the service of the church, to reproach, awe, and restrain the devil. It is a continual reproach cast upon Satan, when he sees those to whom he is like in nature, and with whom he had been a companion in glory, willingly, cheerfully, and triumphantly obey the will of God in the service of Christ; while he, on the contrary, by his wickedness, has cast out himself from the same honorable employment, and enslaved himself to the vilest services that any part of the creation of God is debased to. The whole work of the angels, therefore, is a continual reproach to Satan for his sin and folly. It cries to him, "This might have been thy work, this might have been thy condition." And hereby God also, in many things, frustrates his endeavors, restrains his power, and disappoints his malice. It is inconceivable

what havoc he would make of the lives, and liberties, and estates, of the saints, did not these watchers from the Holy One disappoint him. He sees the church, and every member of it, which he seeks to devour, encamped about, protected, and defended, by this heavenly host; nay, he sees he cannot touch the soul of any one of them, nor cause an hair of his head to perish. This fills him with self-devouring envy and wrath.

§15. (II.) The second question is, To what ends and purposes doth God make use of the ministry of angels in behalf of believers? In general, God doth it to communicate by them the effects of his care and love to the church. This God represented to Jacob in the vision he gave him of the ladder, which stood upon the earth, and whose top reached unto heaven, Gen. xxviii, 12, 15. For although the Jews say somewhat to the purpose, when they affirm this ladder to have denoted the dependence of all things here below on them above, under the rule of Divine Providence, yet they saw not all that was signified thereby. Our Savior tells us, John i, 51, that from thence his disciples should “see heaven opened, and angels ascending and descending upon the Son of man;” plainly alluding to this vision of Jacob. They ascend and descend on his mediation, sent by his authority, aiming at his glory, doing his work, and carrying on his interests. Particularly,

§16. 1. They are sent in an extraordinary manner, to make revelations of the will of God about things tending to the obedience and spiritual advantage of believers. Hereof we have many instances in the Old Testament, especially in God’s dealing with the patriarchs before the giving of the law; which also was confirmed under the New Testament, in many instan-



ces, see especially Rev. i, 1. How far God is pleased to continue this part of the ministration of angels to the present period of the church, is hard to determine. For as many have pretended to revelations by angels, which have been mere delusions of Satan, or imaginations of their own brains; so to affirm, that God doth not, or may not, send his angels to any of his saints, to communicate his mind with respect to some particulars of their own duty, according to his word, or to foreshew something of his own approaching work, seems, in my judgment, unwarrantably to limit the Holy One of Israel. Howbeit, such things in their particular application, are to be duly weighed, with sobriety and reverence.

§17. 2. God, by them, suggests good motions into the minds of his saints. As the devil set himself on work to tempt them to evil, by suggestions suited to the principles of sin within them; so God employs his holy angels to provoke them to that which is good, by suggesting what is suitable to the principle of their spiritual life and grace. And as it is difficult to discover the suggestions of Satan in most cases. from the workings of our own minds, their operations becoming effectual only as they mix themselves with our darkness and lusts; so, on the other hand, it is no less difficult distinctly to take notice of these angelical motions for a similar reason. For, being suitable to the inclinations of that principle of grace which is in the hearts of believers, and producing no effect but by them, they are hardly discerned. So that we may have the benefit of many angelical suggestions of good things, which we ourselves take no notice of. And if it be inquired, how these good motions from angels are, or may be distinguished from the motions of the Holy Ghost, and his actings in believers? I answer, that they differ sundry ways; as,

(1.) These angelical motions are (*ab extra*) *from without*. Angels have no inbeing, no residence in our souls, but work upon us, as an external principle; whereas the Holy Spirit abideth with us, and dwelleth in us; and works (*ab intra*) *from within*, influencing the very principles of our minds. Whence it follows,

(2.) That these angelical motions consist in occasional impressions on the mind and imagination; and are made by advantages taken from outward objects, and the present disposition of the soul; whereas the Holy Ghost, in his operations, engages all the faculties of the soul, really and immediately citing them to gracious actings, according to their nature and quality. Whence also it appears,

(3.) That angelical suggestions communicate no strength or ability to perform the good which they guide and direct to; only they stir up men to act and exert the strength they have. But the Holy Ghost, in his gracious motions, does really communicate spiritual power to the faculties of the soul, enabling them rightly to perform the duties proposed. And,

(4.) Whereas angelical impressions are transient, and abide only in the effects which the mind, excited by them, produces; on the contrary, there is a constant, abiding, effectual work of the Holy Ghost in the hearts of believers, enabling them to will and to do, according to his good pleasure.

§18. 3. God sends forth his angels on his ministry, to preserve believers from many dangers, and ruinous casualties that would otherwise befall them. One great design of Psalm xci, is to acquaint us with this important particular. And to this purpose also it is said, that "the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him," as they did about Elisha to

preserve them from the danger to which they are exposed. Nor is this impeached by the evils and calamities that befall the righteous, for God hath given commission to his angels only to act according to his good pleasure: and this does not hinder but that his saints should be exercised with various troubles and calamities for the trial of their faith and obedience. But yet, in the ordering and managing of these calamities or troubles, they have no less benefit by the ministry of angels, than they have in respect of those from which they are preserved by them. For, inasmuch as they also are designed for their good, their being exposed to them in the best seasons, their support under them during their continuance, and deliverance from them in the appointed time, are all signal mercies which they receive by the ministry of angels.

§19. 4. By this ministry of angels doth God particularly preserve us from the sudden and violent incurSIONS of Satan. Satan in the scripture is called a "serpent," from his subtilty and lying in wait to do mischief; and a "lion," from his rage and destructive fury: and as the one, and the other, he continually seeks the harm and ruin of the whole man; not only of our souls in sin and punishment, but of our bodies, in our lives, health, and welfare. Hence we find so many in the gospel troubled with bodily infirmities from the assaults and impression of Satan. Hereto also belong all those hurtful terrors, affrightments, and surprisals which he endeavors by himself and his agents to cast upon us. Had he his desired liberty, he would, at least, make our whole lives full of disappointments, horrors, vain fears, and perplexities, if he could proceed no farther. Now in all these designs it is more than probable that he is prevented by the ministry of angels, see Job i.

(§19.) 5. They are appointed in their ministry to be witnesses of the obedience, sufferings, and worship of the disciples of Christ; that they may give testimony concerning them before God, and in the great assembly of the last day; so glorifying God for the grace bestowed upon believers, and the assistance afforded them. Thus Paul tells us, that the apostles in their preaching and sufferings, were "made a spectacle to angels," 1 Cor. iv, 9. The holy angels looked on, rejoicing to behold how gloriously they acquitted themselves in the work of their ministry. And to this end doth he charge Timothy, "before the elect angels," to discharge aright the work of an evangelist, 1 Tim. v, 2; because they were appointed of God to be witnesses of his faithfulness and diligence. And it is not improbable but he hath respect to the presence of angels in the assemblies of the saints for the worship of God, where he enjoins modesty and sobriety to women on their account, 1 Cor. xi, 10. And from that particular instance, a general rule may be drawn, for the observation of comeliness and order in all our assemblies, for these holy witnesses are present at all our solemn worship. Church assemblies are the court, the dwelling place, the throne of Jesus Christ, and therefore in them he is in an especial manner attended by these glorious ministers of his presence. And although an holy regard to God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, be the first and principal motive to a right and holy acquitment of ourselves in all our obedience, sufferings, and worship; yet, in subordination thereunto, we may also have respect to the angels, as those who are employed by him to be witnesses of our ways and carriage. Such a respect, I mean, as may administer occasion to them to glorify God in Christ on our behalf; that so all the honor may finally redound to him alone.

§20. 6. God useth the ministry of angels, to avenge his elect of their enemies and persecutors. Thus by an angel he destroyed the army of Sennacherib, when he intended and threatened the destruction of Jerusalem; and by an angel he smote Herod in the midst of his pride and persecution, Acts xii; and this ministry of theirs is in an especial manner pointed at in several places of the Revelation, where the judgments of God are foretold to be executed on persecutors. And this work they wait for in an holy admiration of the patience of God towards many a provoking generation; and are in continual readiness to discharge it to the uttermost, whenever they shall receive their commission for that purpose.

§21. 7. Lastly, the ministry of angels respects the general resurrection and day of judgment. The Lord Christ is every where described coming to judgment at the last day, attended with all his holy and glorious angels. And great shall be their work towards the elect in that day, when the Lord Jesus shall be admired in all that believe. For although the work of the resurrection, like that of the creation, is to be effected by the immediate operation of almighty power, without the intervention of any secondary agents, limited in their power and operation; yet many things preparatory thereto, and consequent upon it, shall be committed to the ministry of angels. By them are the signs and tokens of it to be proclaimed to the world; to them is committed the sounding of the last trumpet, and the giving out the general summons for all flesh to appear before Jesus Christ, with all the glorious solemnity of the last judgment. And as they carry and accompany the departed souls of the saints into the receptacles of their heavenly rest, Luke xvi, 22, so, doubtless, also shall they accompany them in their joy-

ful return to their beloved former habitation, (their bodies) that they may be rebuilt and adorned with glory. By them also will the Lord Redeemer at length bring all the heirs of salvation triumphant into the full possession of their inheritance.

§22. To what has been said, let the following observations be added:

1. That we ought to be very careful to use sobriety in our speculations and meditations about this matter. Herein doth the apostle's caution apply in an especial manner, that we should be "wise to sobriety," and not to think ourselves "wise about what is written." This some neglecting of old, and endeavoring to intrude themselves into the "things which they had not seen," Col. ii, 18; that is, boasting of a knowledge and acquaintance with angels, which they had no safe revealed ground for, fell into pride, superstition, and idolatry, as the apostle declareth. And almost in all ages of the church, men have failed on this account.

2. Danger should not deter us from duty. Because some have failed in this matter, we ought not, therefore, wholly to neglect it; there being so great a concernment of the glory of God, and our own good involved therein. Had others erred, because they had neither way to walk in, or guide to attend to, it had been sufficient to restrain us from attempting any thing in this matter: but whereas it is evident, that they wilfully neglected or transgressed the way, and despised their guide, following their own imaginations, shall others be discouraged in their duty, while they may avoid their miscarriages? We have the word of God for our way and guide; if we go not *besides* it, and if we go not beyond it, we are as safe when we treat of angels, as if we treated of worms. And it is pride to the height, not to inquire after what may be known, because there

are many things that we may not know nor comprehend. If that take place, it will debar us from all search into the mysteries of the gospel; for upon our utmost attainments we know but in part. God's revelation is the object of our knowledge; and so far as that is made and given, so far we may inquire and learn. Besides, it is the height of ingratitude not to search after what may be known of this great privilege and mercy, whereof we are made partakers, in the ministry of angels. God hath neither appointed nor revealed it for nothing. He expects a revenue of praise and glory from it; and how can we bless him for what we know nothing of? Let us on this account glorify God and be thankful. Great is the privilege, manifold are the blessings and benefits that we are hereby made partakers of. Now what shall we render for the exalted privilege, and to whom? Shall we go and bow ourselves down to the angels themselves, and pay to them our homage and obedience? They all cry out with one accord, "see you do it not," we are your fellow-servants. What shall we then do? They unanimously reply, "worship God;" glorify and praise *Him*, who is the God of all angels, who sends and employs them.

3. The fancy of one single guardian angel attending every one, is both a real impeachment of the consolation of believers, and a great inducement to superstition and idolatry.

4. Believers obtain heaven by inheritance; by a free gift of their Father, and not by any merit of their own. Heirs among men claim their inheritance (*jure nascendi*,) because they are born to it, not because they deserve it better than others. Believers look for theirs (*jure adoptionis*,) by right of adoption, whereby they become sons, heirs of God, and co-heirs with Jesus Christ.

## CHAPTER II.

## VERSE 1.

*Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.*

§1. Introduction. §2—4. (I.) Exposition of the words. §5—10. (II) The subject improved by practical observations.

§1. **I**N this second chapter the apostle declares his design and special aim, which was not merely for instruction or information, though that also was in his eye, but chiefly to prevail with the Hebrews to steadfastness in the faith of the gospel, and diligence in attending to all those ways and means whereby they might be established. The foundation of his exhortations to this purpose, he lays in the incomparable excellency of the author of the gospel. Hence naturally flow just and cogent inferences to constancy in the profession of his doctrines, and obedience to him, both absolutely, and in respect of the competition set up against the same by the Mosaical institutions. We shall, according to our usual method,

I. Give the exposition of the words; and

II. Draw such observations from them as may be most useful.

§2. (I.) From the consideration of the glory and excellency of Christ, as the author of the gospel, he draws the inference, (*δια τούτο*) “*therefore ought we;*” that is, for the reasons and causes insisted upon. And thus the word (*παρρησιωμεν*) *flow out*, expresseth their *losing* by any ways or means the doctrine of the gospel wherein they had been instructed, and the benefit hereof. Seeing the gospel hath such a blessed Author, we ought to take care that we forfeit not, or lose not our interest in it. (*Δει ἡμᾶς*) “*Ought we;*” the



apostle joins himself here with them, to manifest that the duty he exhorts them to, is of general concernment to all to whom the gospel is preached, so that he lays no singular burden on them; and that he might not as yet discover to them any jealousy of their inconstancy, or that he entertained any severe thoughts concerning them: apprehensions whereof are apt to render exhortations suspected; the minds of men being ready enough to disregard that which they are persuaded to, if they suspect that undeserved blame lies at the bottom of the exhortation. The word (*περισσοτερως*) *more abundantly*, is joined to (*δια τωτο*) *therefore*, or, “for this cause,” and seems immediately to respect it; and so to intimate the excellent and abundant reason we have to attend to the gospel. But if we transpose the words, (*δει ημωσ περισσοτερως προσεχειν*) then the word (*περισσοτερως*) “more abundantly,” respects the following word (*προσεχειν*) “to attend unto,” and so expresseth somewhat of the manner of the performance of the duty proposed. And this application of the word is most commonly received. The reader may embrace what sense he judgeth most agreeable to the scope of the passage.

§3. In reference to the duty exhorted to, there is expressed the object of it, “the things heard.” Thus the apostle chooseth to express the doctrine of the gospel, with respect to the way and manner whereby it was communicated, namely, by preaching; for “faith cometh by hearing,” and hearing is of the word preached, Rom. x, 14, 15. And herein doth he magnify the great ordinance of preaching, as every where else he maketh it the great means of begetting faith in men. So that the apostle insists upon, and commends to them, not only the things themselves, wherein they had been instructed, but also the way whereby they

were communicated; this as the means of their believing, as the ground of their profession, they were diligently to remember, consider, and attend to. The duty itself, and the manner of its performance, are expressed in the word (*προσεχειν*) "to attend or give heed." It is an attendance with reverence, assent, and readiness to obey, see Acts xvi, 14. God opened the heart of Lydia (*προσεχειν*) "to attend unto the things that were spoken;" not to give them the hearing only; there was no need of the opening of her heart for the mere attention of her ear; but she attended with readiness, humility, and resolution to obey the word. To attend then to the word preached, is to consider the author of it, the matter, the importance, and the ends of it, with faith, subjection of spirit, and constancy.

§4. The duty exhorted to being laid down, a motive or enforcement is subjoined, taken from the danger that would ensue from the neglect of it. And this is either from the sin, or from the punishment, that would attend it, according to the various interpretations of the word (*παρρηνωμεν*) *flow out*, or *fall*. If it signifies to "fall," or "perish," then the punishment of the neglect is intimated. We shall perish as water that is poured on the earth. This sense of the word is embraced by few expositors, yet is it not altogether unworthy our notice; though strictly it is our sinful losing of the word, and the benefits thereof, which the apostle intendeth. And this appears further if we remark, that in the next verses he doth not proceed to prove what he had asserted in this verse, but goes on to other arguments to the same purpose. The expression is supposed generally to allude to leaking vessels, which let the water, poured into them one way, to run out many ways. The word relates to the persons, not to the things, because it contains a crime. It is our duty

to retain the word which we have heard; and, therefore, it is not said that the water flows out, but that we, as it were, pour it out. And this crime is denoted by the addition of the preposition (*παρα*) to the verb (*ῥυειν*.) For as the simple verb denotes the "passing away" of any thing, as water, whether it deserves to be retained or no; so the compound doth the losing of that perversely which we ought to have retained. And there is an elegant metaphor in the word; for as the drops of rain falling on the earth, water it and make it fruitful, so does the celestial doctrine make fruitful unto God the souls of men, upon whom it descends. And in respect to the word of the gospel it is, that the Lord Christ is said to come down "as the showers on the mown grass," Psalm lxxii, 6; so the apostle calls the preaching of the gospel to men, the watering of them, 1 Cor. iii, 6, 7; and elsewhere compares them, to whom it is preached, to the "earth that drinketh in the rain," Heb. vi, 7. Hence, in the words we are upon, men are said to pour out the word preached, when by their negligence they lose, instead of retaining, the benefit of the gospel. So when our Savior had compared the same word to seed, he sets out men's falling from it by all the ways and means whereby seed cast into the earth may be lost or become unprofitable, Matt. xiii. And as he shews this is done various ways; so there are many times and seasons, ways and means, by which we are in danger of losing, or of pouring out, through misimprovement, (as a vessel that does not answer the end for which it is made,) the water or rain of the word which we have received. And this is referred to in that expression, "lest at any time."

§5. (II.) From the words thus explained, we may proceed to the following observations:

*Obs.* 1. Diligent attendance to the word of the gospel is indispensably necessary for perseverance in the profession of it; such a profession, I mean, as is acceptable to God, or will be useful to our own souls. The profession of most is a merely not renouncing the gospel in word, whilst in their hearts and lives they deny the power of it every day. A saving profession is that which expresseth the efficacy of the word to salvation, Rom. x, 10. This will never be the effect of a lifeless attendance; for it implies,

(1.) A due valuation of the grace tendered in it, and of the word itself on that account. Thus the original word (*προσεχειν*) denotes such an attendance to any thing, as proceeds from an estimation and valuation of it answerable to its worth. If we have no such thoughts of the gospel, we can never attend to it as we ought; and if we consider it not as that wherein our chief interest lies, we consider it to no profit. The field wherein is the pearl of great price, is so to be "heeded," as to be valued above all other possessions whatsoever, Matt. xiii, 45, 46. They who esteemed not the marriage feast of the king above all avocations and worldly concerns, were shut out as unworthy, Matt. xxii, 7. If the gospel be not more to us than all the world besides, we shall never continue in an useful possession of it. Constant high thoughts, then, of the necessity, worth, glory, and excellency of the gospel, especially on account of the author of it, and the grace dispensed in it, is the first step in that "diligent heeding" of it, which is here required, that we may keep our faith firm unto the end.

(2.) Diligent study of the gospel and searching into the mind of God in it, that so we may grow wise in its holy mysteries, is another part of this duty. The gospel is the wisdom of God, 1 Cor. i, 24; and in it

are laid up all the stores and treasures of that wisdom, Col. ii, 2, 3. It is to be sought for as silver, and to be searched after as hid treasures, Prov. ii, 4; that is, as worthy the utmost pains and diligence. Men with indefatigable pains, and often with great danger, pierce into the bowels of the earth in search of hidden treasures. Such treasures are not gathered, by every lazy passenger on the surface of the earth. They must dig, seek, and search, who intend to be made partakers of them; and so must we do for these treasures of heavenly wisdom. The mystery of the grace of the gospel is great and deep, such as the angels desire to bow down and look into, 1 Pet. i, 12; and which the prophets of old, notwithstanding the advantage of inspiration, "inquired diligently" after, verse 11. Without this, no man will hold fast his profession. Nor doth any man neglect the gospel, but he that knows it not, 2 Cor. iv, 3, 4. This is the great principle of apostasy in the world, that men have owned the gospel, but never knew what it was; and therefore foolishly leave the profession of it, as they lightly took it up. Studying the word is the security of our faith.

(3.) Mixing the word with faith is also required in this attention, see chap. iv, 2. As good not hear, as not believe; believing is the end of hearing, Rom. x, 11; and therefore Lydia's faith is called her attention, Acts xvi, 14. To hear, and not believe, is in the spiritual life, what to see meat, and not to eat it, is in the natural; it will please the fancy, but will never nourish the soul. Faith alone realizeth the things spoken to the heart, and gives them subsistence in it, Heb. xi, 1, without which, as to us, they hover in loose and uncertain notions.

(4.) Laboring to express the word received, in a conformity of heart and life to it, is another part of

this attention. This is the next proper end of our hearing; and to do a thing appointed for a certain end, without aiming at that end, is no better than the not doing it at all, in some cases much worse. The apostle says of the Romans, that they were cast into the mould of the gospel doctrine, chap. vi, 13. It left upon their hearts an impression of its own likeness, or produced in them an express image of that holiness, purity, and wisdom, which it revealeth. This is "to behold, with open face, the glory of the Lord, as in a glass, and to be changed into the same image," 2 Cor. iv, 18; that is, the image of the Lord Christ, manifested to us, and reflected upon us by means of the gospel. When the heart of the hearer is animated with gospel truths, and is thereby moulded and fashioned into their likeness, and expresseth that likeness in its fruits, or a conversation becoming the gospel, then is the word attended to in a right manner. This, and this alone, will secure to the word a station in our hearts, and give it a permanent abode.

(5.) Watchfulness against all opposition to the truth, or power of the word in us, belongs also to this duty. And as these oppositions are so many, powerful, and dangerous, so ought this watchfulness to be great and diligent. Hence,

§6. *Obs. 2.* There are sundry times and seasons, several ways and means, men are in danger of losing the word that they have heard, if they attend not diligently to preserve it. (Μηποτε) "at any time," or "by any way or means." This our Savior teacheth us at large in the parable of the seed, which was retained but in one sort of ground out of the four into which it was cast, Matt. xiii. And this is confirmed by the experience of all ages. Yea, few there are at any time, who, when they have heard the gospel, keep it as they

ought. We may briefly name the seasons wherein, and the ways whereby, the hearts and minds of men are made like "leaking vessels," (contrary to the use for which they were made) to pour out, or let slip, the word of truth.

(1.) Some lose it in a time of peace and prosperity. That is a season which slays the foolish. "Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked." According to men's pastures, so are they filled, and then forget the Lord. They fill their lusts, until they loath the word; and thus *quails* often make a lean soul. A prosperous outward estate hath stifled many a promising conviction, yea, and weakens faith and obedience often in many of the saints. The warmth of prosperity breeds swarms of apostates, as the heat of the sun doth insects in the spring.

(2.) Some lose it in a time of persecution. "When persecution ariseth," saith our Savior, "they fall away." Many go on apace in profession, until they come to see the cross. The sight of this puts them to a stand, and turns them quite out of the way. They thought not of it, and do not like it.

(3.) Some lose it in a time of temptation. It pleaseth God, in his wisdom and grace, to suffer sometimes an hour of temptation to come upon the church for trial, Rev. iii, 10; that the members may be made thereby conformable to Christ their head, who had his special hour of temptation. In this trying state, many lose the word. They have been cast into a negligent slumber, by the secret power of temptation; and when they awake, and look about them, the whole efficacy of the word is lost and gone.

§7. The ways and means, also, whereby this woful effect is produced are various, yea, innumerable. For instance, the love of this present world. This made

Demas a "leaking vessel," 2 Tim. iv, 10; and this choked one fourth part of the seed in the parable, Matt. xiii. Many might have been rich in grace, had they not made it their end and business to be rich in this world, Tim. vi, 9. Again, the love of sin. A secret lust cherished in the heart will make it (*plenum rimarum,*) "full of chinks," so that it will never retain the showers of the word; and it will assuredly open those chinks again as fast as convictions may stop them. Moreover, false doctrines, false worship, and superstitious fancies will do the same. I place these things together, as those which work in the same kind upon the curiosity, vanity, and darkness of the human mind. These break the vessel, and at once pour out all the benefits received.

§8. *Obs.* 3. The gospel heard is not lost without great sin; as well as the inevitable ruin of the souls of men. And lost it certainly is, when it is not "mixed with faith," when we receive it not into "good and honest hearts," and when the end of it is not accomplished in us. But this, undoubtedly, befalls us not without our sin, and woful neglect of duty. The word, of its own nature, is apt to abide, to incorporate itself with us, and to take root; but we cast it out, and pour it forth from us. Surely, then, they have a woful account to make, on whose souls (Oh shuddering thought!) the enormous guilt thereof shall be found at the last day.

§9. *Obs.* 4. It is in the nature of the gospel to water dry and barren hearts, and to make them fruitful unto God. Where this word comes, it makes "the parched ground a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water," Isa. xxxv, 7. These are "the waters of the sanctuary, that heal the barren places of the earth, and make them fruitful," Ezek. xlvi, 7; the "river that makes glad the



city of God," Psal. xlvi, 7; that "river of living water that comes forth from the throne of God," Rev. xxii, 1; and the places and persons which are not healed or benefited by those waters, are left to barrenness and burning for evermore, Ezek. xlvii, 11; and Heb. vi, 8. With the dew hereof doth God water his church every moment, Isa. xxvii, 3; and then doth it "grow as a lily, and cast forth its roots as Lebanon," Hos. xiv, 5—7. Abundant fruitfulness to God follows a gracious receiving of this dew from him; and blessed are they who have it distilling on them every morning, who are watered as the garden of God, or as a land for which he careth.

§10. *Obs.* 5. The consideration that the gospel is revealed by the Son of God himself, is a powerful motive to that diligent attention which is here inculcated. This is the apostle's inference, which he pursues through the greatest part of the ensuing chapter. And the Divine requisition, that "we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard," is most reasonable upon many accounts.

(1.) Because of the authority wherewith Christ spake the word. Others spake and delivered their message as servants, he as the Lord over his own house, chap. iii, 6. The Father himself proclaimed from heaven, that if any one would have any thing to do with God, they were "to hear him." Matt. xvii, 10; 2 Pet. i, 17. The whole authority of God was with him; for him did God the Father seal, or upon him did he put the stamp of all his authority. It cannot then be neglected, without the contempt of all the incontestable authority of God; which cannot be but a sore and tremendous aggravation of the sins of unbelievers and apostates at the last day.

(2.) Because of the love that is in it. There is in it the love of the Father in sending the Son; and there is also in it the love of the Son himself, condescending to teach and instruct the sons of men, who, by their own fault, were cast into error and darkness. What greater love (except his dying for us) could the eternal Son of God manifest unto us, than that he should undertake in his own person, to become our instructor: See 1 John v, 20. He that shall consider the brutish ignorance and stupidity of the generality of mankind in the things of God; the miserable, fluctuating, and endless uncertainties of the more inquiring part of them; and withal the importance of their being brought into the knowledge of the truth, cannot but in some measure, see the greatness of the love of Christ in revealing to us the whole counsel of God. Hence his words are said to be "gracious," Luke iv, 22; and grace is said to be poured into his lips, Psal. xlv, 2; and this is no small motive to our earnest attention to the gospel.

(3.) The fulness of his revelation is also of the greatest importance. He came not to declare merely a part, but the whole will of God; all that we should know, all that we should do, and all that we should believe. In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, Col ii, 3. He opened all the dark sentences of the will of God, hidden from the foundation of the world. There is in his doctrine all wisdom, all knowledge, as all light is in the sun, and all water in the sea. Now if every word of God be excellent, if every part of it, delivered by his servants of old, was to be attended to upon penalty of extermination out of the number of his people; how much more miserable will our condition be, and how much more deplorable is our blindness and obstinacy, if we have not a heart to attend to this full revelation of himself and his will!

(4.) Because it is *final*. “Last of all, he sent his Son.” No new, no farther revelation of God, is to be expected in this world but what is made by Jesus Christ. To this only we must attend, or (dreadful, yet equitable alternative!) we are lost for ever! In short, the true and only way of honoring Christ, as the Son of God, is by diligent attention and cheerful obedience to his gospel. The apostle having evidenced his glory as the Son of God, draws this as the most important inference from it. Thus also he himself; “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” Where there is no obedience to the word, there is no faith in, nor love to Jesus Christ.

## VERSES 2--4.

*For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will.*

§1. Connexion and scope of the words. §2--9. (I.) Their exposition. §10. (II.) Observations. 1. Threatenings are evangelical, and of singular use. §11. This farther proved. §12, 13. 2. All punishments are effects of vindictive justice. §14. 3. The concernments of the law and gospel are to be weighed by believers. §15. 4. Divine revelation is stedfast. §16--22. 5. The gospel being a great salvation, whosoever neglecteth it shall therefore unavoidably perish.

§1. **I**N these verses the apostle prosecutes his exhortation laid down in that foregoing, with the addition of many peculiar enforcements. If a disregard to the law was attended with a sure and sore revenge, how much more must the neglect of the gospel be so. The words consist of two general parts; a description of the law; and, a description of the gospel.

§2. “For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast.” The law is called, by a periphrasis, “the word spoken, or pronounced, by angels.” The Greek word

(λογος) is very variously used in the New Testament, and is here taken for a system of doctrines; and by the addition of the term (λαληθεις) *spoken*, as published, preached, or declared. Thus the gospel from the principal subject matter of it, is called (ὁ λογος ὁ τῆς σταυρου) 1 Cor. i, 18; *the word*, the doctrine, the preaching *concerning the cross*, or Christ crucified. So here (λογος) the “word,” is the doctrine of the law; that is, the law itself spoken and promulgated (δια αγγελων) *by angels*; that is, by the ministry of angels. Having newly insisted on a comparison between Christ and the angels, his argument is greatly corroborated when it is considered, that the law was, “the word spoken by angels,” but the gospel was delivered by the Son, who is so far exalted above them. It is no where affirmed, that the law was “given by angels;” but that the people “received it by the deputation of angels;” and that it was “ordained” by angels, and here “spoken” by them. From hence it is evident, that not the original authoritative giving of the law, but the ministerial ordering of things in its promulgation, is that which is ascribed to angels. They raised the fire and smoke, they shook and rent the rock; they framed the sound of the trumpet; they effected the articulate voices which conveyed the words of the law to the ears of the people; and therein proclaimed and published the law, whereby it became “the word spoken by angels.”

And that in these words lies the spring of the apostle’s argument, is manifest from the interrogatory particles (ει γαρ) *for if*; for if the law that was published to our fathers by angels, was so vindicated against the disobedient; how much more shall the neglect of the gospel be revenged.

He affirms concerning the word thus published, that it was (βεβαιος) *firm or steadfast*; that is, it became an

assured covenant between God and the people. That peace which is firm and well grounded, is called (*ειρηνη βεβαια*) "a firm unalterable peace." The law's becoming firm, sure, or stedfast, consists therefore in its being ratified to be the covenant between God and that people, Deut. v, 2, "The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb." And therefore in the greater transgressions of the law, the people were said to forsake, to break, to profane, to transgress the covenant of God; Levit. xxvi, 15.

§3. "And every transgression, and stubborn disobedience received a meet retribution." The one Greek word (*παραβσις*) is properly "any transgression;" the other (*παρακοη*) includes a refusal of obedient attendance. But how may this be extended to every sin and transgression, seeing it is certain that some sins under the law were not punished, but expiated by atonements? We should remember, that every sin was contrary to the doctrine and precepts of the law; and therefore punishment was assigned to every sin, though not executed on every sinner. And so the word (*ελαβεν*) *received*, denotes not the actual infliction of punishment, but the constitution of it in the sanction of the law. Besides, the sacrifices for atonement manifested punishment to have been due, though the sinner was relieved against them. But the sins, especially intended by the apostle, were in fact such, as were directly against the law as it was the covenant between God and the people: for which there was no provision made of any atonement or compensation; but the covenant being broken the sinners were to die without mercy; and thus to be utterly exterminated by the hand of God, or that of man by his appointment. And therefore the sins against the gospel, which are opposed to those, are not all transgressions, or any

whatever, that professors may be guilty of, but final apostasy, or unbelief, which render the doctrine of it, to those who are of that description, altogether unprofitable, a "just recompence of reward" (*ενδικος μισθοποδοσιω*) is a recompence *just* and *equal*, proportionable to their crime, according to the judgment of God, which is, "that they who commit sin are worthy of death," Rom. i, 32; and particularly refers to the temporal punishment of cutting off from the land of the living, according to the dispensation of the law which the Israelites were subject to. Next follows a description of the gospel. And,

§4. In this part of the words there occurs, The subject matter spoken of; "so great salvation." A farther description of it; from its principal author, "it began to be spoken of by the Lord." From the manner of its propagation; "it was confirmed unto us by them that heard it." From its confirmation by the testimony of God "by signs, wonders, mighty works, and various gifts of the Holy Ghost." After all a neglect is supposed; "if we neglect;" and finally, the punishment thereof is intimated; "how shall we escape?" All which are to be severally explained. The subject matter treated of is expressed in these words, "so great salvation." And that it is the gospel which is intended in that expression, is evident from the preceding verse. For that which is there called "the word which we have heard," is here called "great salvation;" as also from the following words, where it is said to be declared or "spoken by the Lord;" and farther "propagated by them that heard him." And the gospel is called "salvation," by a metonymy of the effect for the cause. "For it is the grace of God bringing salvation," Titus ii, 11. The word that is able to save us. The

doctrine, the discovery, the instrumental efficient cause of salvation; Rom. i, 16; 1 Cor. i, 20, 21.

§5. The apostle farther describes the gospel from its principal author or revealer; “which at first began to be spoken by the Lord.” Here the word (*αρχην*) denotes *beginning*, (*principium temporis*) “the beginning of time.” That is, it began in its open, clear, and actual revelation to be spoken by the Lord himself, and was carried to perfection by those who were appointed and enabled by him for that noble purpose, Job i, 17, 18. Thus was it declared by him in his own person, as the law was given by angels.

§6. He farther describes the gospel from the way and means of its conveyance to us; “it was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.” And herein also he prevents an objection that might arise in the minds of the Hebrews: inasmuch as they, at least the greatest part of them, were not acquainted with the personal ministry of the Lord; they heard not the word spoken by him. Hereunto the apostle replies; that though they themselves heard him not, yet the same word which he preached, was not only declared, but confirmed, unto them, by those that heard him. “Those that heard him,” is a periphrasis of “the apostles,” from that great privilege of their hearing immediately all those things that our Lord taught in his own person. For neither did the church of the Jews hear the law as it was pronounced or heard by angels, but had it confirmed to them by ways and means of God’s appointment. And he doth not say merely, that the word was taught, or preached by them; but (*εβεβαιωθη*) it was *confirmed*, made firm and stedfast, being delivered to us infallibly by the ministry of the apostles. There was a Divine (*βεβαιωσις*) *firmness*. certainty, and infallibility in the apostolical declaration of the gos-

pel; like that which was in the writings of the prophets, which Peter, comparing with miracles, calls (βεβαιωτερον λογον) a *more firm, stedfast, and sure word*. And this infallible certainty of their word was from their Divine inspiration.

§7. Our inspired teacher farther describes the gospel by the Divine attestations given it, which also adds greatly to the force of his argument and exhortation. The word (συνεπιμαρτυρησις, agreeing with τῷ Θεῷ) is of a double composition, denoting a “concurring testimony of God,” a testimony given unto, or together with that of the apostles. These miraculous tokens are various. The first are (σημεια) *signs*; that is, miraculous works, wrought to signify the presence of God by his power with them that wrought them, in confirmation of the doctrine which they taught. The second are (τερατα) *prodigies, wonders, works beyond the nature, above the energy of natural causes, wrought to fill men with wonder and admiration, stirring them up to a diligent attention to the doctrine they accompanied*. Thirdly, (δυναμεις) *mighty works, wherein evidently a mighty power, the power of God, is exerted in their operation*. And fourthly, (πνευματος αγιου μερισμοι) *gifts of the Holy Ghost*.

And this was of special consideration in dealing with the Hebrews. For the delivery of the law, and the ministry of Moses, having been accompanied with many signs and prodigies they made great inquiry after signs for the confirmation of the gospel, 1 Cor. i, 22; which though our Lord neither in his person, nor by his apostles, would grant them in their time and manner, to satisfy their wicked and carnal curiosity, yet in his own way and season he exhibited them abundantly for their conviction, or to leave them utterly inexcusable; John x, 38.



§8. The gospel being of this nature, thus taught, thus delivered, thus confirmed, there is a neglect of it supposed, (ver. 3, *αμελεσάντες*) “If we neglect,” if we regard not, if we take not due care about it. The word intimates an omission of all those duties which are necessary for our profitable retaining the word preached, and that to such a degree as utterly to reject it; for it answers to those transgressions of, and stubborn disobedience to the law, which disannulled it as a covenant, and were punished with excision. “If we neglect;” that is, if we continue not in a diligent observance of all those duties which are indispensably necessary to a holy, useful, profitable profession of the gospel.

§9. There is an awful punishment intimated upon this sinful neglect of the gospel; “How shall we escape,” fly from or avoid a just retribution, “a meet recompense of reward? As the breach of the law had a punishment, suitable to the demerit of the crime, inflicted on the quality; so there is to a neglect of the gospel even a punishment justly deserved by so great a crime, so much greater and more dreadful than that attending the law, by how much the gospel, on account of its nature, effects, author, and confirmation, was more excellent than the law. A “sorer punishment,” as our apostle elsewhere calls it, chap. x; as much exceeding the other as eternal destruction under the curse and wrath of God, exceeds all temporal punishments whatever. The manner of ascertaining the punishment intimated, is by an interrogation; “How shall we escape?” Wherein three things are intended. (1.) A denial of any ways or means for escape or deliverance. There is none that can deliver us, no way whereby we may escape: See Peter iv, 17, 18. And (2.) the certainty of the punishment itself, it will as to the

event assuredly befall us. And (3.) the inexpressible greatness of this unavoidable evil. "How shall we escape?" We shall not, there is no way for it, nor ability to bear what we are, if continued neglecters, liable unto: Matt. xxiii, 33; 1 Pet. iv, 18.

§10. (II.) The words thus explained present to us many interesting observations.

*Obs.* 1. Motives to a due valuation of the gospel, and perseverance in the profession of it, taken from the penalties annexed to its neglect, are evangelical, and of singular use in preaching the word. "How shall we escape if we neglect?" Some would fancy, that all threatenings belong to the law; as though Jesus Christ had left himself and his gospel to be securely despised by profane and impenitent sinners; but as they will find the contrary to their eternal ruin, so it is the will of Christ we should let them know this, and thereby warn others to take heed of their sins and plagues.

Now these motives from comminations or threatenings, I call evangelical.

(1.) Because they are *recorded* in the gospel; that we are thence taught them, and thereby commanded to make use of them. And if the dispensers of the word insist not on them, they deal deceitfully with the souls of men, and detain from them the whole counsel of God. And as such persons will find themselves to have a weak and feeble ministry here, so also they will have a sad account of their "partiality in the word" to give hereafter. Let not men think themselves more evangelical than the author of the gospel, more skilled in the conversion and edification of the souls of men than the apostles; in a word, more wise than God himself, which they must do if they neglect this part of his ordinance.

(2.) Because they *become* the gospel. It is meet that the gospel should be armed with threatenings, as well as attended with promises: and that on the part of Christ, of sinners, of believers, and of preachers. *On the part of Christ himself the author of it.* A sceptre in a kingdom without a sword; or a crown without a rod of iron, will quickly be trampled upon. Both are therefore given into the hands of Christ, that the glory and honor of his dominion may be known: Psal. ii, 9—12. *On the part of sinners;* yea, of all to whom the gospel is preached To keep them in awe and restraining fear, that they may not boldly and openly break out in contempt of Christ. These are his arrows that are sharp in the hearts of his adversaries, whereby he awes them. Christ never suffers them to be so secure, but that his terrors in these threatenings visit them ever and anon; that they may be left inexcusable, and the Lord Christ justified against them at the last day. He hath told them beforehand plainly what they are to look for, Heb. x, 26, 27. *On the part of believers;* even they stand in need to be put in mind of the terror of the Lord, and what a fearful thing it is to fall in the hands of the living God; and that even our God is a “consuming fire.” And this to keep up in their hearts a constant reverence of the majesty of Jesus Christ with whom they have to do. These comminations give them, also, constant matter of praise and thankfulness, when they see in them, as in a glass that will neither flatter nor causelessly terrify, a representation of that wrath which they are delivered from by Jesus Christ, 1 Thess. i, 10, They are needful to them, moreover, to ingenerate that fear which may check the remainder of their lusts and corruptions; and to prevent security and negligence in attending to the gospel, which by means of

those lusts and corruptions are apt to grow upon them. The hearts of believers are like gardens, wherein there are not only flowers, but weeds also; and as the former must be watered and cherished, so the latter must be destroyed. If nothing but dews and showers of promises should fall upon the heart, though they seem to tend only to the cherishing their graces, yet the weeds of corruption will be apt to grow up with them, and in the end to choke them, unless they are blasted by the severity of threatenings. And notwithstanding their persuasions, that in the use of means they shall be secured from finally falling, yet they know there is an infallible connexion signified in these awful threatenings, between sin and destruction, 1 Cor. vi, 9; and they must avoid the one, if they would escape the other. Hence they have in a readiness wherewith to balance temptations, especially such as accompany sufferings for Christ and the gospel. Liberty would be spared, life would be spared; it is hard to suffer and to die. But are we afraid of a man that shall die, more than of the living God? Shall we, to avoid the anger of a worm, cast ourselves into his wrath who is consuming fire. Shall we, to avoid a little momentary trouble, to preserve a perishing life, which a sickness may take away tomorrow, run ourselves into eternal ruin? Man threatens me if I forsake not the gospel, but God threatens if I do. Man threatens death temporal, which yet it may be he shall not have the power to inflict; God threatens death eternal, which no backslider in heart shall avoid. On these and the like accounts are comminations useful even to believers. Again, these declarations of eternal punishment to neglecters of the gospel are becoming on the part of the preachers and dispensers of it; that their message be not slighted, nor their persons despised. God would have even them

to "have in a readiness to revenge the disobedience of men," 2 Cor. x, 6; not with carnal weapons, killing and destroying the bodies of men, but by such a denunciation of the vengeance that will ensue on their disobedience, as shall undoubtedly take hold upon them, and end in their everlasting ruin.

§11. And this will farther appear if we consider,

1. That threatenings of future penalties on the disobedient are far more clear and express in the gospel than in the law. The curse, indeed, was threatened and denounced under the law, and instances of its execution were given in the temporal punishments that were inflicted on the transgressors of it: but in the gospel the nature of this curse is explained, and wherein it consisteth is made manifest. For as eternal life was but obscurely promised in the Old Testament, though really promised; so death eternal under the curse and wrath of God was but obscurely threatened therein, though really threatened. And therefore, as life and immortality were brought to light by the gospel, so death and hell, the punishment of sin under the wrath of God, are more fully declared therein. The nature of the judgment to come, the duration of the penalties to be inflicted on unbelievers, with such intimations of the nature and kind of those punishments as our understandings are able to receive, are fully and frequently insisted on in the New Testament; whereas they are but obscurely inferred from the writings of the Old Testament.

2. The punishment threatened in the gospel, as to degrees, is greater and "more sore" than that which was annexed to the mere transgression of the first covenant. Hence the apostle calls it, "death unto death," 2 Cor. ii, 16; by reason of the sore aggravations which the first sentence of death will receive from the wrath due to a contempt of the gospel.

And with this ought they to be well acquainted, who are called to dispense the gospel. A fond conceit hath befallen some, that all denunciations of future wrath, even to unbelievers, is legal, which therefore it doth not become the preachers of the gospel to insist upon: so would men make themselves wiser than Jesus Christ and his apostles; yea, they would disarm the Lord Christ, and expose him to the contempt of his vilest enemies. Suffice it to add, that they have been observed to have had the most effectual ministry, both for conversion and edification, who have been made wise and dexterous in managing gospel comminations towards the consciences of their hearers.

§12. *Obs. 2.* All punishments annexed to the transgressions either of the law or gospel are the effects of God's vindictive justice, and consequently just and equal; "a meet recompense of reward." Foolish men have always had tumultuating thoughts about the judgments of God. Hence was the vain imagination of them of old, who dreamed that an end should be put, after some while, to the punishment of devils and wicked men: so turning hell into a kind of purgatory. Others have presumptuously disputed, that there shall be no hell at all; but a mere annihilation of ungodly men at the last day. That which they seem principally to have stumbled at, is the assignation of a punishment infinite in duration, as well as in its nature extended to the utmost capacity of the subject, for a fault finite, temporary, and transient. Now that we may justify the proceeding of the supreme Judge herein, and the more clearly discern that the punishment finally inflicted on sin, is but "a meet recompense of reward," we must consider that God's justice constituting, and in the end inflicting the reward of sin, is essential to him. "Is God unrighteous?"

saith the apostle, "who taketh vengeance?" Rom. iii, 5. The true fountain and cause of the punishment of sin is the justice of God, which is an essential property of his nature, and inseparable from his works. And this, absolutely, is the same with his holiness, or the purity of his nature. So that God doth not assign the punishment of sin arbitrarily, that he might do so or otherwise, without any impeachment of his glory; but his justice and holiness indispensably require that it should be punished, even as it is indispensably necessary that God in all things should be just and holy. We have no more reason to quarrel with the punishment of sin, than we have to repine that God is holy and just, that is, that he is God.

He alone knoweth what is the true demerit of sin; and except from his own declaration, none of his creatures know any thing of it. And how shall we judge of what we know nothing of, but what we learn from him, or gather from what he doth? We see amongst men, that the guilt of crimes is aggravated according to the dignity of the persons against whom they are committed. Now, no creature knowing him perfectly against whom all sin is committed, none can truly and perfectly know what is the desert and demerit of sin, but by his revelation who is perfectly known to himself. And what a madness is it otherwise to judge of what we do not otherwise understand? Shall we make ourselves judges of what sin against God deserves? Let us first by searching find out the Almighty to perfection, and then we may know of ourselves what it is to sin against him. Besides, we know not what is the opposition that is made by sin to the holiness, the nature, and very being of God. As we cannot know him perfectly against whom we sin, so we know not

perfectly what we do when we sin. It is but the least part of the malignity and poison of sin, that we are at best able to discern. We see not the depth of the malicious respect which it hath to God. And are we capable to judge aright of what is its demerit? But all these things are open and naked before that infinite wisdom of God, which accompanieth his righteousness in all his works. He knows himself against whom sin is committed; he knows the condition of the sinner; he knows what contrariety and opposition there is in sin to himself; he knows what it is for the dependent creature to subduct itself from under the government, and oppose itself to the authority and being of the Holy Creator, Ruler, and Governor of all things; in a word, he absolutely, perfectly, and exclusively knows what sin deserves, and therefore the several degrees of punishment that ought to be, and that shall be inflicted.

§13. In the final punishment of sin, there is no mixture of mercy; nothing to alleviate, or take off from the uttermost of its desert. This world is the time and place for mercy. While here God causeth his sun to shine, and his rain to fall on the worst of men, filling their hearts with food and gladness. Here he endures them with much patience and forbearance, doing them good in a way unspeakably various, and to many of them making a daily tender of mercy, which might make them blest for ever. But the season for these things is past in the day of recompense. Sinners shall then hear nothing but, "go ye cursed." They shall not have the least effect of mercy shewed them to all eternity. They shall then have judgment without mercy who shewed no mercy. Cries will do nothing at the last day; not obtain the least drop of water to cool the tongue in its torment. Some men doubtless



have secret reserves, that things will not proceed at the last day, as they are now urged to believe they will. They hope to meet with better quarter than what is talked of; that God will not be inexorable, as is pretended. Were not these their inward thoughts, it were not possible they should so neglect the season of grace as they do. But alas! how will they be deceived? God indeed is gracious, merciful, and full of compassion; but this world is the place, and now the time wherein he will exercise them. They will be for ever shut up from unbelievers at the last day. This is the acceptable time; this is the day of salvation; if this be despised, if this be neglected, expect no more to hear of mercy through eternal ages.

§14. *Obs.* 3. Every concernment of the law and gospel, both as to their nature and promulgation, is to be weighed and considered by believers, to beget in their hearts a right and due valuation of them. To this end are they here so distinctly proposed; as of the law, that it was “spoken by angels;” and of the gospel, that it is “a great salvation,” the word “spoken by the Lord,” confirmed with “signs and miracles;” all which the apostle would have us to weigh and distinctly consider. As God doth nothing in vain, so neither speaks he any thing in vain; much less would he do so in the things of his law and gospel, wherein the great concerns of his own glory, and the souls of men, are so eminently involved. There is in all those concernments of the law and gospel, a mixture of Divine wisdom and grace; and from this fountain they all proceed, and the living waters of it run through them all. There is in them all, a gracious condescension to our weakness. God knows that we stand in need of special marks, as it were, to be set on every important truth. Such is our weakness and our slow-

ness to believe, that we have need the word should be to us, "line upon line, and precept upon precept; here a little and there a little." The momentous truths contained in the law and gospel have their various influences and successes on the souls of men. Some have been wrought upon by one consideration, some by another. In some the holiness of the law, in others the manner of its administration, has been effectual. Some have fixed their hearts principally on the grace of the gospel; and some on the person of its author. And the same persons, at several times, have had profitable assistance from these several considerations of the one and the other. Hence it is manifest, that in these things God doth nothing in vain; infinite wisdom is in all, and infinite glory will be the result of all.

And how should this stir us up to a diligent searching of the word, wherein God hath recorded all the weighty affairs of his law and gospel for our use and advantage! That is the cabinet wherein all these jewels are laid up and disposed, according to his wisdom and the profound counsel of his will. A general view of it will but little satisfy, and not at all enrich our souls. A very little insight into the word is apt to make men think they see enough; but the reason of it is, because they like not what they see, as men will not like to look farther into a shop when they like nothing that is at first presented to them. But if indeed we find profit, sweetness, and life, in the discoveries that are made to us in the word, especially about the law and gospel, we shall be continually aiming after a farther acquaintance with them.

§15. *Obs.* 4. What means soever God is pleased to use in the revelation of his will; he gives it a certainty, steadfastness, and evidence, which our faith may

rest upon, and which cannot be neglected without the greatest sin. "The word spoken was stedfast." If the word be not a firm foundation for the faith and obedience of men, they cannot be justly punished for the neglect of it; but there is that stedfastness in the word itself, that evidence of its being from God, that it makes it the duty of men to believe it with faith divine and supernatural, and that stability will never deceive them.

§16. *Obs. 5.* The gospel is "great salvation," and the "neglecters" of it shall therefore "unavoidably perish" without remedy.

By the "gospel" we are to understand with the apostle the "word preached," or recorded; and it may be called "salvation" upon a double account:

(1.) *Declaratively*; in that the salvation of God by Christ is declared, taught, and revealed thereby. And therefore under the Old Testament, the gospel is called a "bringing of glad tidings," a "publishing or declaring of peace and salvation," Nahum i, 15; Isa. lii, 7; and is described as a "proclamation of mercy," peace, pardon, and salvation for sinners; Isa. lxi, 1, 2. And life and immortality are said to be "brought to light" thereby, 2 Tim. i, 10. Every word and promise in the whole book of God, that intimateth or revealeth any thing belonging to this salvation, is itself a part of the gospel.

(2.) It is salvation *efficiently*; in that it is the great instrument which God is pleased to use, in bestowing salvation upon the elect. And therefore Paul commits believers to "the word of grace," as that which is able to build them up, and give them an inheritance among all them that are sanctified, Acts xx, 32. And James calls it "the ingrafted word," which is able to save our souls, chap. i, 21; the mighty power of Christ

being put forth to accompany it for that purpose: This efficiency is observable in some of the principal parts of salvation. In the regeneration and sanctification of the elect. for instance, the first external act of this salvation is wrought by the word, 1 Pet. i, 23; we are “born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God.” It is true, it doth not this by any power resident in itself, and always necessarily accompanying its administration; for then all would be so regenerated to whom it is preached; and there would be no neglecters of it. But it is the distinguished instrument of God for this end; and in that respect is mighty and powerful.

Again: By the gospel and its promises, as the most exalted instruments or means, are believers actually and really made partakers of the Spirit, as to his gifts and graces, his indwelling presence and abode. Gospel promises are (*vehicula Spiritus*) the chariots that bring his Holy Spirit to our souls, 2 Pet. i, 4. Besides, the gospel is eminently efficacious in our justification, which hath so great a share in this “salvation,” that it is often called salvation itself. They that are justified, are said to be saved, Eph. ii, 8; and this is by the gospel, because therein is constituted the true law of justification for a sinner; because therein is held forth a sinner’s righteousness; and hereby does faith come, by which we become actually interested in Christ, and in all the fruits and benefits of his mediation; for it cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, Rom. x, 17. Moreover, there is in this salvation a growth in “spiritual wisdom, and an acquaintance with the mystery of God, even the Father and the Son,” which is also an effect of the gospel. Finally, it is the “word of promise,” or the gospel, whereby God gives “strong consolation,” Heb. iv, 17, 18; not only support and

comfort in bearing troubles, but glorious exaltations and ecstasies of joy are oftentimes wrought in the hearts of believers by the gospel. Now they can endure, now they can suffer, now they can die; joy is upon their heads and in their hearts, and sorrow and sighing flee away. Here is rest, here is peace, here are refreshments, here are pleasures, here is "life to be desired." The good Lord sweeten and season all our hearts with all these consolations, these joys of his kingdom, and that by the blessed word of his grace! And in these respects is the gospel a "word of salvation."

§17. But it is said to be "*great* salvation." Now we have seen that the gospel is called salvation metonymically, the cause being called by the name of the effect. But in this adjunct of great, "*so great*," the effect itself, salvation itself, preached and tendered by the gospel, is principally intended. It is usual in the scripture, where it would suggest to our thoughts an inconceivable greatness to use some such expressions as plainly intimate somewhat more than can be expressed. "*So great*;" that is, absolutely so, and comparatively so with respect to the benefits received by the law; and inexpressibly, inconceivably so. There ought then to be no expectation that we should declare the real greatness of this salvation, which the apostle intimates to be inexpressible; we shall only point out some of those considerations wherein the greatness of it doth principally consist and appear.

1. It is "*great*" in the eternal contrivance of it. When sin had defaced the glory of the first creation, and the honor of God seemed to be at a stand, no way remained to carry it on to that end to which all things at first tended; all creatures were, and for ever would have been, ignorant of a way for recovering

things into the former, or a better order, or bringing forth a salvation for "that which was lost;" for besides that there were such horrible confusions, and such inextricable entanglements, brought upon the creation, and the several parts of it, which none could discern how they could be jointed and set in order again; there appeared a repugnancy in the very properties of the Divine nature to any salvation for sinners. Let sinners be saved, and what shall become of the justice, holiness, and wrath of God, all which are engaged to see a "meet recompense of reward" rendered to every transgression? And this was enough eternally to silence the whole creation, by reason of that indispensable obligation which is on them always, and in all things, to prefer the honor and glory of their Maker, before the being or well-being of any creature whatever. Here therefore infinite wisdom, infinite grace, infinite goodness, and infinite holiness, discover themselves in that contrivance of salvation, which fully solves all those difficulties and seeming contradictions; keeps entire the glory of God's attributes, repairs the honor lost by sin, and reduceth the whole creation into a new order and subserviency to the glory of its Maker.

2. The salvation preached in the gospel is "great," on account of the way and means whereby it was accomplished; or the great effect of the infinite wisdom and grace of God in the mediation, incarnation, and sufferings of his Son. It must assuredly be "great" salvation which he came himself to work out. And how doth he do it? Is it by the mighty power of his word, as he made all things of old? No, this work is of another nature, and in another manner must be accomplished. For to this purpose he must be "made flesh," John i, 14; "made of a woman," Gal. iv, 4. Though he was in the form of God, and equal to God

the Father, yet he was to humble and empty himself, to appear in the form of a man, of a servant, Phil. ii, 6, 7. This is that great mystery of godliness, "God manifest in the flesh," that angels desire to look into. That the Son of God should take the nature of man into subsistence with himself in the same person, which was necessary for the effecting this salvation, is a thing that the whole intelligent creation must eternally admire. In this nature he must be made under the law, subject to its commands, and bound to the obedience which it required. It became him to fulfil all righteousness, that he might be our complete Savior; for though he was a Son, yet he was to learn and yield obedience, without which our salvation could not be perfected. And as the Son of God must obey, that we may be accepted and crowned; so he must die, shed his blood, and make his soul an offering for sin. If he will be a captain of salvation to bring many sons to glory, he must himself be made perfect by sufferings, Heb. ii, 10. And herein assuredly was the love of God manifest, that "he laid down his life for us," John iii, 16. He rose from the dead, and now lives for ever to make intercession for us, and to "save to the uttermost all them that come to God by him." By these means was the salvation preached in the gospel obtained, which surely manifest it to be a "great salvation." Would God have sent his Son, his only Son, and that in such a manner, were it not for the accomplishment of a work, as well great and glorious in itself as indispensably necessary with referenceto its end? Would the Son himself have so emptied himself of his manifestative glory, condescended to so low a condition, wrestled with such difficulties, and undergone at length such a cursed and shameful death, had not the work been great wherein he was employed? O

the blindness and stupidity of the sons of men! they profess that they believe these things to be true, at least they dare not deny them to be so; but for the effect of them, for the salvation wrought by them, they value it the least of all things! Hear and behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish! Shall the Son of God (for what you care) shed his blood in vain? Shall he obey, and suffer, and bleed, and pray, and die for a thing of nought? Is it nothing unto you that he should undergo all these things? Was there want of wisdom in God, or of love to his Son, so to employ him, so to treat him, in a business which you esteem of so very small concernment, as that you will scarce turn aside to inquire after it? Assure yourselves that these things are of greater moment, lest one day you find it so to your eternal ruin.

3. This salvation will appear to be "great," if we consider what by it we are delivered from.

What are we delivered from by this salvation? In a word, every evil in this world, or that which is to come. And all evil may be referred to two heads: (1.) That which corrupteth and depraveth the principles of our nature in their being and operation. And, (2.) That which is destructive of our nature as to its well-being and happiness. The first of these is sin, the latter is punishment; and both of them take up the whole nature of evil. Now from both these, with all their effects and consequences, are believers delivered by this salvation; namely, from sin and death. The Lord Christ was called "Jesus," because he saves his people from their sins, Matt. i, 22. And he is also the Savior that delivers them from the "wrath to come:" 1 Thess. i, 10. And this is "great salvation." What is the sickness of the body, to the disease, yea, the death of the soul? What is the imprisonment of the



outward man, under the wrath of poor worms like ourselves, and that for a few days, to the chains of everlasting darkness? What is a little outward temporary want, to the want of the favor, love, and presence of God to eternity? What is death temporal, past in a moment, an end of troubles, an entrance into rest, to death eternal, an eternal dying, under the curse, wrath, and righteous vengeance of the Holy God? These things have no proportion one to another. So inexpressibly "great" is the salvation, that there is nothing left which is adequate to furnish an illustration of it.

4. This salvation is "great," on account of the end of it, or that which it brings believers to. The excellency of the inheritance which we obtain thereby, is such as no tongue can express, no heart conceive. It brings us to the favor and love of God, to the adoption of children into durable rest and peace; in a word, the enjoyment of God in eternal glory. Oh! the blessedness of this rest, the glory of this inheritance, the excellency of this crown, the eternity and unchangeableness of this condition, the greatness of this salvation! How weak, how low, how unworthy in every respect are our apprehensions of it! Yet, surely, through the blessed revelation of the spirit of grace by the word of the gospel, we see, we feel, we experience so much of it, as is sufficient to keep us up to an holy admiration and longing after it all the days of our earthly pilgrimage.

§18. It remaineth now, that we declare the unavoidable-ness of their destruction, who "neglect" this so great salvation. There are three things that make the punishment or destruction of any person to be unavoidable: 1. That it be just and equal. 2. That there be no relief or remedy provided for him. And, 3. That

he to whom it belongs to inflict punishment, be able and resolved so to do: and they all concur to the height in this case. For it is just and equal that such persons should be destroyed; whence the sentence concerning them is so discretionary and absolute, "He that believeth not, shall be damned," Mark xvi, 16. And the Holy Ghost supposeth this case so clear and undeniable, that he refers the proceedings of God therein to the judgment of sinners themselves, Heb. x, 29. And they who are judged on this account at the last day will be speechless; have nothing to reply, nothing to complain of. And the sentence denounced against them will appear to all to be righteous, because they despise an overture of a treaty about peace and reconciliation between God and their souls. Now what greater indignity can be offered unto him, than to reject his tenders, without so much as an inquiry after what his terms are, as the most do to whom the gospel is preached? Is not this plainly to tell him, that they despise his love, scorn his offers of reconciliation, and fear not in the least what he can do unto them? And is it not just that such persons should be filled with the fruit of their own ways? Let men deal thus with their rulers whom they have provoked, that have power over them, and see how they will fare with them. Neither will God be mocked, nor shall his grace always be despised with impunity. When men shall see and learn by woful experience what pitiful worms they are, and have some beams of the greatness, majesty, and glory of God shining upon them, how will they be filled with shame, and forced to subscribe to the righteousness of their own condemnation, for refusing his treaty and terms of peace!

These terms contain "salvation;" and men in the neglect of them, neglect and refuse "their own salvation;"

and can any perish more justly than they who refuse to be saved? If God's terms had been great, hard, and difficult. yet, considering by whom they were proposed, and to whom, there was all the reason in the world why they should be accepted; and their destruction would be just that should not endeavor to observe them to the utmost. But now it is life and salvation that he tenders, on the neglect of which he complains, that men "will not come to him that they might have life." Certainly there can be no want of righteousness in the ruin of such persons: but that which the apostle principally builds the righteousness and inevitableness of the destruction of the gospel neglecters upon, is the "greatness" of the salvation tendered unto them; "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" And if this be despised, is it not righteous that men should perish? If we know not, yet God knows how to set a value upon this great effect of his love, wisdom, and grace, and how to proportion punishment to its contempt. The truth is, God alone is able sufficiently to revenge the greatness of this sin, and thereby, the indignity done to him. Is it meet that God should be mocked, his grace be despised, his justice violated, his glory lost; and all, that sinners may go unpunished? Let them think so whilst they please, God thinketh otherwise, all the angels in heaven think otherwise, all the saints from the beginning of the world to the end of it, think otherwise, and will glorify God to eternity for the righteousness of his judgments on them that obey not the gospel.

§19. 2. Suppose the destruction of these persons be in itself righteous, yet may there not be some remedy and relief provided for them, that they may not actually fall under it? May there not yet be some way of escape for them, and so their ruin not be so unavoidable as is pretended? No; there neither is, nor can be

any relief provided for them that sin against the gospel. For, from what spring, what fountain should it proceed? Mercy and grace are principally sinned against, and if the gospel be neglected, their whole design is defeated; nay, the utmost of mercy and grace is already sinned against in it, and what remaineth now for the relief of a sinner? Is there any other property of the Divine nature, the consideration of which will administer to men any ground of hope? Is there any thing in the name of God, in that revelation that he hath made of himself by his works, or in his word, to give them encouragement? doubtless nothing at all. But yet suppose that God had not laid out all the riches and treasures of his wisdom, grace, love, and goodness in gospel salvation by Jesus Christ, (which yet he affirms he hath) suppose that in infinite mercy there were yet a reserve for pardon; by what way and means should it be brought forth and made effectual? We have seen that God neither would nor could ever have exercised pardoning mercy towards sinners, had not way been made for it by the blood of his Son: what then? Shall Christ die again that despisers of the gospel may be saved? Is the blood of Christ such a "common thing," as to be so cast away upon the lusts of men? Besides; when should he make an end of dying? They who have once neglected the gospel may do so upon a second trial, nay undoubtedly would do so, and thence must Christ often die, repeatedly be offered, and all still in vain. Neither hath God any other Son to send to die for sinners, he sent his only begotten Son once for all; and he that believeth not on him must perish for ever. All the mercy and grace that God hath for his creatures (if we believe himself) is engaged in gospel salvation only; and if that be despised, in vain shall men look for any other. As for a

provision of mercy for them that despise the gospel, where is any one word recorded concerning it? Nay, doth not the scripture in all places fully and plainly witness against it? "He that believeth not, shall be damned." "There remains no more sacrifice for sin." "He that believeth not, the wrath of God abideth on him." In short, they who neglect the gospel must perish, and that eternally, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

§20. 3. Then all hopes of escaping must arise from hence, that he whose right it is, and on whom it is incumbent thus to take vengeance, will not be able so to do, or at least not to such a degree, as to render it so fearful as is pretended. This need not much to be insisted on. It is God with whom men have to do in this matter; and they who allow his being, cannot deny him to be omnipotent and eternal. Now what cannot he do who is so? It will at length be found to be "a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." There is to wicked men the same everlasting cause, both of being and of punishment. The same hand that upholds them, shall inflict them, and that for ever. What his righteousness requires, his power and wrath shall execute to the uttermost, so that there will be no escaping. And these are the holy foundations on which all the gospel threatenings are built, which will all of them be accomplished, with no less certainty than the promises.

§21. Now from all that hath been spoken on this proposition we may learn,

1. To admire the riches of the grace of God, which hath provided "so great salvation" for poor sinners. Such and so great as it is, we stood in need of it. Nothing could be abated without our eternal ruin. But when Divine wisdom, goodness, and mercy shall

set themselves at work, what will they not accomplish? and their astonishing effect doth the scripture variously express: "God so loved the world;" "God commendeth his love towards us;" "greater love hath none than this;" riches of grace; treasures of wisdom; exceeding greatness of power; and the like. In this will God be glorified and admired to all eternity. Which way soever we look, whatever we consider in it, here is that which will entertain our souls with delight and satisfaction. The eternal counsel of God, the person of Christ, his mediation and grace, the promises of the gospel, the evil and wrath we are freed from, the redemption and glory prepared, the privileges we are admitted to, the consolations and joys of the Spirit, the communion with God we are called to, how glorious are they in the eyes of believers? or assuredly ought to be. How can we enough bewail that vanity whence it is, that the mind suffereth itself to be possessed and filled with other things? Alas, what are they if compared to the excellency of this love of God in Christ Jesus! Here lies our treasure, here lies our inheritance, why should not our hearts be here also? Were our minds fixed on these things as they ought, how would the glory of them cast out our cares, subdue our fears, sweeten our afflictions and persecutions, take off our afflictions from the fading and perishing things of this world, and make us in every condition rejoice in hopes of the glory that shall be revealed! What are those things which the better and more refined part of mankind search into? Alas! they are things that came out of nothing, and are returning hitherward apace; things which when they are known, do not enrich the mind, nor at all better it for its eternal condition.

On the contrary; the things of this great salvation are eternal, glorious, mysterious, that have all the char-

acters of God's excellency enstamped upon them; whose knowledge gives the mind its perfection, and the soul its blessedness. If we are believers, these things are ours. The rich man is much in the contemplation of his riches, because they are his own; and the great man of his power, because of his property in it. Now all these things are "ours, if we are Christ's;" made over to us in the promise of the gospel, and conferred upon us by the Spirit of grace. And are these things to be despised, are they to be cast aside among the things wherein we are least concerned? What! all these riches ours, all these treasures, this goodly inheritance, this kingdom, this glory, and yet we will not be constant in thoughts and meditations about them? It is undoubtedly a sign, at least, that we question our title to them, and that the evidences we have of them will not endure the trial. But woe unto us if that should be the end of our profession; and if it be otherwise, why are not our minds fixed on that which is our own, and which no man can take from us? Oh! that God would give us the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, that the eyes of our understanding being opened, they may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, Eph. i, 17—19. Solomon tells us how this wisdom is to be obtained, Prov. ii, 2—5, "If thou cryest after knowledge and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest for her as for silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures! then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." It is by praying and earnest supplications, with persevering diligence, that we attain this wisdom; and many persons, otherwise weak and simple, have by these means grown wise in

the mysteries of God. And how many others, though wise in this world, yet through the neglect of it, walk in darkness all their days?

§22. 2. This will teach us, what esteem we ought to have of the word of the gospel, by which alone this great salvation is revealed and exhibited unto us; the great means which God is pleased to use, to bring us to a participation of it. This one consideration is enough to inform us what valuation we ought to put upon it, seeing we cannot expect the treasure without the purchase of the field. Some neglect it, some despise it, some persecute it, some look upon it as foolishness, some as weakness, but "to them that believe, it is the power of God and the wisdom of God." To neglect the gospel is to neglect and despise the Son of God who was the author of it, and consequently the love and grace of God in sending him. So Christ tells the preachers of the gospel, "he that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me." Neglect of the gospel reflects immediately upon the Lord Christ and the Father; and therefore our apostle bids us to take heed that we despise not "him who spake from heaven," which can be no otherwise done, but by neglect of his word. This word was confirmed and witnessed from heaven, by the mighty works and miracles which attended the dispensation of it; and though we saw not those miracles, yet we have them left on infallible record for our use, that by them we may be yet stirred up to value and attend to the word in a due manner. God hath so ordered things in his holy providence, that no one can neglect the word, without shutting his eyes against such light and evidence of conviction as will leave him abundantly inexcusable at the last day.



## VERSES 5—9.

*For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the Son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.*

§1--8. The words explained, in connexion with the psalm from whence they are taken. §9--11. Observations. 1. Great is the privilege of the gospel church: §12--17. 2. Great is the condescension of God. §18--20. 3. God's respect for man in the person of Christ calls for eternal admiration. §21. 4. Inconceivable the love and condescension of Christ. §22. 5. Christ's exaltation a pledge of ours.

§1. **T**HE first words of the fifth verse, (*ὅτι γὰρ*) *for not*, declare that the apostle is in pursuit of his former argument, but the particle "for" doth not always intimate the introduction of a reason in confirmation of what is past; but sometimes a progress to somewhat else of the like kind. The "world to come," is not made, nor is any where in scripture said to have been made, subject to angels; but it was made subject to Jesus, and therefore he is exalted above them. This he proves from the testimony of the psalmist to this purpose; all things were made subject to man, who for a little while was made lower than the angels; but this man was Jesus. All things in the event agree to him; he was made "for a little while" lower than the angels; and then he was crowned with glory and dignity, all things being made subject to him, from all which it appears, that it is he, and not angels, to whom the world to come is put in subjection. This is the series of the apostle's discourse. "The world to come, whereof

(λαλεμεν) *we treat.*” The “world” here intended is no other but the promised state of the church under the gospel, with the worship of God therein, with a special relation to the Messiah, the author and mediator of it. Concerning which the apostle “treats” with the Hebrews in this epistle. He “treats” of that which was already done in the crowning of Jesus with glory and honor, as the words following do manifest; and this crowning of him was upon his ascension. The apostle doth not treat directly any where in this epistle concerning heaven, or the blessedness to come; for this is not what he opposeth to the Judaical church-state and worship, but that of the gospel.

§2. Concerning this world, the apostle declares that it is “not made subject to angels:” it was not put in subjection to angels, in its erection or institution, in the rule and disposal of it, or in the power of judging and rewarding. Not the first; for they did not reveal the will of God concerning it; the law, which was the foundation of the Judaical church-state, was only “given by the disposition of angels.” Not the second; their office in this world is a ministry, chap. ii, 13, not a rule or dominion; yes, they are brought into a co-ordination of service with them that have the testimony of Jesus, Rev. xix, 10; xxii, 9; being equally with us subject to him, in whom they and we are gathered into one head, Ephes. i, 10. Not the third; for that is the sole prerogative of Jesus Christ, as the scripture every where testifies.

§3. “But one in a certain place testified:” neither place nor person is specified, but the Hebrews were not ignorant whose words they were, which he made use of, nor where they were recorded. The “one” here mentioned is David; and the “certain place” is the eighth psalm; which was sufficiently known.

“What is man,” &c. Before we enter into a particular explication of the words, and of the apostle’s application of them, we may observe, that all things whatsoever are said to be put in subjection to man; that is, to human nature in one or more persons, in opposition to angels, or the angelical nature; and that this privilege was never absolutely nor universally made good but with respect to the person of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. “What is man!” by way of admiration, yea, he cries out with a kind of astonishment. David having exercised his thoughts in the contemplation of the greatness, power, wisdom, and glory of God manifesting themselves in his mighty works, especially the beauty, order, majesty, and usefulness of the heavens; and those glorious celestial bodies which present themselves to all the world; falls thereon into this admiration, that this great and infinitely wise God, who by his word gave being and existence to all those things, and thereby made his own excellencies conspicuous to all the world, should condescend to that care and regard of man, seeing he might for ever satisfy himself, in those other apparently more glorious products of his power and godhead, (מה אנוש) “What is poor miserable mortal man,” obnoxious to grief, sorrow, anxiety, pain, trouble, and death: (בן אדם) and ‘the son of man;’ of one *made of earth*. Now the psalmist useth this expression to heighten his admiration of the grace and condescension of God. And as the person of the first Adam cannot be here especially intended; for although he made himself (אנוש) “a miserable man,” and subject to death, yet he was not (בן אדם) “the son of man;” Luke iii, ult. so there is nothing in the words but may properly be ascribed to the nature of man in the person of the Messiah. For as he was called in an especial

manner, "the son of man;" so was he made "a man subject to sorrow," and acquainted above all men with grief and trouble, and was born on purpose to die. Hence in the contemplation of his own condition he cries out, Psal. xxii, 7, "I am a worm and not (אִישׁ) a man of any consideration in the world." "That thou rememberest him," or "art mindful of him." To remember, in scripture, when ascribed to God, always intends some acts of his mind, and purpose of his will, and that in a signal manner, either for good or evil. On this account God is said sometimes "to remember us for good," and sometimes "to remember our sins no more." The inclination of the mind of God towards the nature of man in the person of Jesus Christ, in reference to all the good done in and by it, is intended in this expression; and therein is couched the whole counsel and purpose of God, concerning the salvation of mankind, through the humiliation, exaltation, and whole mediation of the man Christ Jesus. "That thou visitest him." The Hebrew word (בִּקֵּר,) though variously used, yet constantly denotes the acting of a superior towards an inferior; and commonly expresseth the acting of God towards his people for good. And especially in the term "visiting," used to express the stupendous act of God in sending Jesus Christ to take our nature upon him, Luke i, 68, "He hath visited and redeemed his people;" and verse 78, "The day-spring from on high hath visited us." This was the ground of the psalmist's admiration, and which will be so in all believers to eternity.

§4. "Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels;" or "lower for a little while than the angels." These words intend not the exaltation of the nature of mere man, as if they should intimate, that such is his dignity, that he is made but a "little less than angels;"

which is destructive of that sense the apostle intends. The word (חסר) used by the psalmist, is rendered by the apostle by a word (ελαττω) which, as the other does, properly signifies a diminution of state and condition, or a depression of any one from what he before enjoyed. And this, in the first place, belongs to God's "visitation;" and the acting of the will of Christ in this matter, suitably to the will of the Father, is expressed by words of the same import, "he emptied himself;" and "he humbled himself," Phil. ii, 7, 8, "He was made less than the angels." This the Hebrews had seen, and might from his humiliation raise an objection against what the apostle asserted about his preference above them. Wherefore he acknowledgeth, that he was made "less" than they, shews that this was foretold, and in his following discourse assigns the reasons. "Than the angels," (מאלהים παρ αγγελος.) The *Sept.* and all the old Greek translations read "angels." The Targum hath (מלאכות) "angels." And the scope of the place necessarily requires that sense of the word. And although from his birth, the angels adored his person as their Lord; yet in the outward condition of his human nature, he was made exceedingly beneath their state of glory and excellency. He made him lower (טעם βραχυ τι) "for a little while," or a *short season*. That which renders this sense unquestionable, is the apostle's restraining them precisely thereto; ver. 9. It was but for "a little while," that the person of Christ in the nature of man was brought into a condition more indigent than that of angels is exposed to: neither was he for that season made "a little," but "very much" lower than the angels. And had this been the whole of his state, it could not have been an effect of that inexpressible love and care which the psalmist so admires. But seeing it is but for a little continuance, and

that for the blessed ends which the apostle declares, nothing can more commend them to us. "He crowned him with glory and honor;" (עטרת) "the crown" is (*insigne regium*) the badge and token of supreme and kingly power. To be "crowned," then, is to be invested with sovereign power, or with the right and title thereunto. To be crowned with "glory and honor," is to have a glorious and honorable crown, or rule and sovereignty. (כבוד) "a weight of glory;" from the Hebrew word (כבד,) to be *heavy*; (βαρος δοξης) "a weight of glory," as the apostle speaks in allusion to the primitive signification of this word, 2 Cor. iv, 17. "Thou madest him have dominion over the works of thy hands;" (המשילוהו) "madest him to rule;" (καλεσθησας αυτου επι) "appointedst him in authority over." He had actually rule and dominion given him upon his coronation; and the extent of this dominion is the works of God's hands. And lest any from the indefinite expression should think this rule limited, it is added (παντα υπελαξε) "he hath put all things without exception in subjection to him; and to manifest his absolute and unlimited power, with the unconditional subjection of all things unto him," he adds, they are placed (υποκατω των ποδων αυτου) "under his very feet;" a dominion every way unlimited and absolute.

§5. For the explication of the objective extent of the rule and dominion mentioned, he adds, "for in that he hath made all subject unto him, he left nothing that is not put under him." For whereas it might be objected, that there is no mention in the psalm of the "world to come" whereof he treats; he lets them know, that seeing the assertion is universal and unlimited, that all things whatsoever are put under him, there lies no exception: they are all brought into order under this rule. And so by this testimony thus explained, as re-

cessity requires it should be, he hath fully confirmed, that the "world to come" being one of the especial works of God, and not put into subjection to angels, is made subject to man; which was what he undertook to demonstrate.

To direct this testimony to its proper ends, and make way for its just application, he declares, negatively, unto whom it is not applicable; "but now we see not yet all things put under him." Man it was, concerning whom these words were spoken; "What is man?" A long space of time hath elapsed since the giving out this testimony, much longer since the creation of man, and yet all this while we see that all things are far enough from being put under his feet. All mankind in conjunction are very remote from being invested with the dominion here described, from having the whole creation of God cast in subjection under their feet, much less any individual mere man.

Hence we ourselves by our own observation may easily discern, that this word respects not, principally, either the first man or his posterity; for we see not as yet after this long space of time since the creation, that all things are put in subjection under him.

§6. These things being spoken indefinitely of man by the psalmist, the apostle in the application of them to his present purpose, proceeds to shew, positively, who it is that was especially intended, and in whom the words had their full accomplishment. "But, saith he, we see Jesus," &c. that is, it is Jesus concerning whom the psalmist spake; and in whom alone this testimony is verified. He was made lower than the angels; and he had all things put in subjection to him. These things, said he, we see; they are evident, nor can be denied while the gospel is acknowledged. Yet it was not on his own account, but "that he might suf-

fer death;" which is farther explained by the addition of the cause and end of his suffering, "That he by the grace of God might taste of death for every man." The words (*δια το παθημα τε θανατε*) "for the suffering of death," intend the final cause of the humiliation of Christ; he was made low that he might suffer death; not the meritorious cause of his exaltation: for if they express his minoration itself, then the end of it is contained only in the close of the verse, that he "might taste of death for every man." In which exposition of the words, the sense would be, that he "suffered death," that by the grace of God he might "taste death," which is no sense at all. This therefore is the import and natural order of the words, 'but we see Jesus crowned with glory and honor, who was for a little while made lower than the angels for the suffering of death, that he by the grace of God might taste death for every man.'

§7. The end then is "the suffering of death;" he was so humbled that he might suffer death. This yet more displeased the Jews; the necessity wherefore, he therefore more immediately proves; and proceeds to amplify that humiliation which he had before intimated; and that in four things:

1. In the impulsive and efficient cause of it. "That by the grace of God;" the gracious, free, sovereign purpose of the will of God suited to and arising from his natural goodness and benignity, mercy and compassion, exerting themselves therein. It was not out of any anger or displeasure of God against Jesus, in whom his soul was always pleased; not out of any disregard to him, whom he designed hereby to be crowned with glory and honor; but of his love, kindness, and goodness towards others, who could no otherwise be brought to glory.



2. In the manner of the death; (*οπως γευσεται θανατου*) “that he should taste of death;” so die as to experience the sorrows, bitterness, and penalties of death. To “taste of death,” implies really to die; not in appearance or pretence, in opinion or shew, as some foolishly of old blasphemed about the death of Christ, which could have had no other fruit but a shadow of redemption. It is intimated, that there was bitterness in the death he underwent; himself compares it to a “cup.” To “taste of death,” is a Hebraism; and it compriseth also, to find out and experience what is in death. So that Christ by “tasting of death” had experience, knew what was in death, as threatened to sinners. He found out and understood what bitterness was in that cup wherein it was given him. When Agag thought he should escape a violent death by the sword, he thus expresseth his joy; 1 Sam. xv, 32, “Surely the bitterness of death is past,” or taken away. Our Lord’s conquest over death may be also intimated in this expression; for though the phrase be used concerning other persons also, yet as applied to him, the event sheweth, that it was only a thorough taste of it that he had, he neither was, nor could be detained under the power of it. And thus by the grace of God did he taste of death.

3. The end of this tasting of death; it was for others (*υπερ παντος*.) The constant use of these words, “to die for another,” imports to die “in his room and stead;” and this the Jews understood in the use of their sacrifices, where the life of the beast was accepted instead of the life of the sinner. Thus Christ tasted of death; he was by the grace and wisdom of God substituted as a mediator and surety (*αντιψυχος*) in their stead, (for whom he died,) to undergo the death

which they should have undergone, that they might go free.

4. This dying of Christ is said to be (*ὑπερ παντος*) "for all." The word is either of the masculine or neuter gender; and is put for the plural, (*παντων*) by an enallage of number, "for all men," that is, all those many sons, which God by his death intended to bring into glory, ver. 10; those sanctified by him, whom he calls his brethren, ver. 10, 11; and children given him, ver. 13; whom by death he delivers from the fear of death, ver. 15; even all the seed of Abraham, ver. 16.

§8. In reply to any exceptions that might be urged against our interpretation, I grant that the psalmist's design, in general, is the goodness, kindness, love, and care of God towards mankind: but then it is in the special instance of the person of the Messiah alone, he undertakes to make good his assertion of mankind's pre-eminence. I also grant that he hath respect to the dignity and honor conferred on the first man at his creation; not directly and intentionally as his chief scope, but by way of allusion, as prefiguring and obscurely representing that great glory and honor, which mankind was to be advanced to in the person of the Messiah, of whom the whole psalm is prophetic. The general scope of the psalm will admit of no other interpretation. Now the object of the psalmist's admiration could not be either the state of man as fallen by sin, which is far enough from a matter of exultation and joy; nor yet the state of Adam in innocency, in no privilege whereof, without a restitution by Christ, have we any share or interest. There are not any words in the testimony that can properly be applied to, or verified in any other man. Not in Adam at his first creation; for how was he diminished and made less than angels, and therein depressed from another

state and condition, when, on the supposition, it was the first? Or how can this be said of mankind in general, or of believers in an especial sense? and how could this be spoken of them for a little while, seeing the nature of man in itself considered, is for ever beneath the angelical? Again; the world to come was never put in subjection to Adam, nor any other man, the man Christ Jesus excepted.

§9. *Obs.* 1. This is the great privilege of the gospel church, that it is made subject to, and immediately depends upon the Lord Jesus Christ, and not any other, angels or men.

1. The Lord Christ is our head. The several parts of his church were all scattered and disordered by sin, but are now all collected again, and brought into order under one head. Him hath he given to be “head over all things to the church.” The whole sovereignty over all the creation that is committed to him, is only for this end, that he may be the more perfect head unto the church. What greater honor can we have, than to be freemen of the corporation whereof he is the head? than to be subjects of that kingdom of which he is the sovereign? What greater safety than to be inseparably united to him, who is invested with all power and authority over the whole creation of God, even every thing that may do us good or evil!

2. He is our only head. The church is so put in subjection under him, as not to be subject to any other. If any other were or might be such a head, they must be angels or men. As for angels, we have it here plainly testified, that the church “is not made subject” to them. And amongst men, the apostles of all others might seem to lay the justest claim to this privilege and honor; but they openly disclaim any pretence thereunto. So doth Paul, 2 Cor. i, 24. “We have no do-

minion," or headship, "o ver your faith," or any thing that concerns your obedience to God, and your worship of him, "but are helpers of your joy." And again: "We preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus the Lord," the only Lord, "and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake," 2 Cor. iv, 5. And Peter, (as if foreseeing, that some who should come after would pretend to such pre-eminence) warns the elders that they should not think themselves "lords over God's heritage," 1 Pet. v, 3. And Christ is not only thus the only head, in general, to the whole church, but also to every individual believer. "The head of every man is Christ," 1 Cor. xi, 3.

He is the head of influence and of government. He is the only head of vital influence. As from the natural head all the influences of life, for subsistence, motion, acting, guidance, and direction are communicated to the body, and to every member thereof; so from the Lord Christ alone, as he is the spiritual vital head of the church, in whom are the springs of life and all quickening grace, are communicated to the whole church, and every believer, both the first quickening principle of spiritual life itself, and all succeeding supplies and influences. If any man think he may have grace from any but Christ alone, be they angels or men, let him turn himself to them; but withal let him know assuredly, that he forsakes the "fountain of living waters," for "broken cisterns," which yield him no relief.

He is the only head of rule and government. The scripture tells us, that he was faithful in the whole house of God, as was Moses, and that as a Lord over his own house, to erect, rule, and establish it; and himself when he gives commission to his apostles, bids them teach men to do and observe all that he had commanded them;

and accordingly they tell us, that they delivered unto us what they received from the Lord; and commanded us not to be wise above what is written. Therefore to add any thing in the worship of God to the laws of the church, is to exercise authority and dominion over its faith; and to pretend that this “world to come,” this blessed gospel church state is put in subjection “unto them,” although it be not so to angels. A vain and proud pretence! His own authority, and that alone, should immediately affect the soul and conscience of every believer. He that subjects himself aright to them, doth it not upon the authority of the church by whom they are taught, but upon the authority of Christ by whom they are enacted.

3. As he is our only head, so he is our immediate head. We have our immediate dependence upon him, and our access to him is also immediate. He hath, indeed, appointed means for communicating his grace, and for exercising his authority; but this belongs only to the way of our dependence, and hinders not but that our dependence is immediately on himself, he being the immediate object of our faith and love.

§10. This privilege is greatly augmented, in that he will assuredly take care of all its concerns, seeing unto him only doth it betake itself. The church made it of old part of her plea, that she was as one “fatherless,” Hos. xiv, 3, that is, every way helpless, one that had none to succor, none to relieve her. And Christ giveth this as a reason why he stirreth up himself to the assistance of his people, because “there was no man that appeared for their help, no intercessor to interpose for them,” Isaiah lix, 16. Now God having placed the church in this condition, so as to be oftentimes altogether orphans in this world, to have none to give

them the least countenance or assistance, and the church itself choosing this condition, to renounce all hopes and expectations from any else, betaking itself to the power, grace, and faithfulness of the Lord Christ alone, he will most certainly take care of it, and provide for it at all times infallibly. They are members of his body, and he alone is their head; they are subjects of his kingdom, and he alone is their king; they are children and servants in his family, and he alone is their father, Lord, and master; and can he forget them, can he disregard them? Had they been committed to the care of men, it may be some of them would have fought and contended for them; though their faithfulness is always to be suspected, and their strength is as a "thing of nought." Had they been put in subjection to angels, they would have watched for their good, though their wisdom and ability be greatly limited; and shall not the Lord Jesus Christ, now they are made his special care, whose power and faithfulness are infinitely above those of any other mere creatures, excel them also in care and watchfulness for our good? And this should teach us,

§11. The equity and necessity of our universal obedience to God in Christ. He hath freed us from "subjection" to men and angels, that we might serve him, and live unto him. He hath taken us to be his peculiar ones, his lot and portion, from whom he expects all his revenue of glory out of this world. And he hath left us no excuse, no pretence, for the neglect of any duties of obedience that he requireth of us. We cannot plead that we have other work to do, other lords and masters to serve; he hath set us free from them all, that we might be his. If a king take a servant into his family, and thereby free and discharge him

from being liable to any other duty or service, may he not justly expect that such a one will be diligent in observing all his commands; especially considering also the honor and advantage that he hath by being taken near to his royal master, and employed in his affairs? And shall not God much more expect the like from us, considering how exceedingly the privilege we have by this relation unto him surpasseth all that men can obtain by the favor of earthly princes? And if we will choose other lords of our own to serve, if we are so regardless of ourselves as that we will serve our lusts and the world, when God hath such a respect for us, as that he would not suffer us to be made subject to the angels of heaven, how inexcusable shall we be in our sin and folly? You shall be for me, saith God, and not for any other whatever. And are we not miserable if we like not this agreement?

§12. *Obs. 2.* The consideration of the infinitely glorious excellencies of the nature of God, manifesting themselves in his works, doth greatly set out his condescension and grace, in his regard and respect to mankind. The heavenly bodies which we behold are indeed in themselves exceedingly glorious. Their frame, greatness, beauty, order, course, and usefulness, bespeak them admirable and glorious: the naked view of them is enough to fill the mind of man with admiration and astonishment. And the more we contemplate them, the more skilful we are in the consideration of their nature, order, and use, the more excellent they appear; and yet it is but a small part of their greatness and beautiful arrangement that we can attain a certain knowledge of; so that they still remain more the objects of our admiration and wonder, than of our science. Hence the wisest among the heathens who were destitute of

the teachings of the word and spirit of the Lord, worshipped them as gods.\*

The more we consider them, the more will their glory and greatness appear to us. As the children of Israel said of the sons of Anak, "We were before them in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight." May we not much more say concerning ourselves, compared with these glorious works of the Most High, we are all but as grasshoppers in comparison of them? And whence is it, that God should set his heart upon us? That he hath made them so beautiful, so glorious, so excellent, and that out of nothing; doth it not declare his infinite power, wisdom, and goodness? Do they not lead us to the contemplation of his infinite excellencies? And whence is it, that he who made all these things of nothing, should have such regard to the weak frail nature of man?

§13. To illustrate the Divine condescension, behold the greatness of God! "The heaven of heavens," saith Solomon, "cannot contain him," 1 Kings viii, 18. Our thoughts of greatness are apt to consist in adding one thing to another, until the object be extended to the utmost of our imagination. But this hath no relation to the immensity of God; which is not his fill-

\* Hence the very name of God in the Greek language ( $\Theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$ ) is taken (according to some) from ( $\theta\epsilon\iota\nu$ ) *to run*, which they derive from the constant course of the heavenly bodies. They saw with their eyes how glorious they were; they found by reason their greatness and dreadful motion; experience taught them their use, as the immediate fountains of light, warmth, atmospherical moisture and rain, and so consequently of life, growth, and all useful things. It may be they had some tradition of that dominion which was at first allotted to the sun and moon over day and night; Gen. i, 16. On these and the like accounts, having lost the knowledge of the true and only God they knew not so well whither to turn themselves for a Deity, as to those things which they saw so full of glory, and which they found to be of so universal and communicative a goodness and usefulness. And in them did all the idolatry in the world begin.



ing of all imaginary places or space, but an infinite existence in an infinite being; so that as he is present with or *indistant* from the whole creation; for saith he, "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" Jer. xxiii, 24. So is he no less present, where there is no part of the creation. And if he should produce thousands of worlds, which he can do by his power, he would be no less present in them all. And this not by extending his essence and greatness, but by the infiniteness of his being. Neither are there parts in this immensity; for that which hath parts cannot be infinite or immense. God is wholly present every where. And thus far reason will go; it will assent to the truth of that which it cannot comprehend, because it is convinced that it cannot be otherwise. What remains, it leaves to faith and reverential adoration. Who can sufficiently admire this excellency of the nature of God? How astonishing this greatness! How are all the nations of the world, as the drop of a bucket, as the dust of a balance, as vanity, as nothing before him! What is a little dust to the immensity of being? To that whose greatness we cannot measure, whose nature we cannot comprehend, whose glory we can only adore? What is a poor worm to him who is every where, and who is every where filled with his own excellencies and blessedness! "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and measured out the heaven with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Behold the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balances. Behold he taketh up the isles as a very little thing; all nations before him are as nothing, and they are counted unto him less than nothing and vanity," Isaiah xl, 12—17.

§14. Behold his infinite *self-sufficiency*! Had he not been every way self-sufficient, before the existence of all other things, nothing could have been produced. All the properties of his nature being infinite, have that which fills and satisfies them. His understanding is infinite: and as nothing could comprehend the infinite nature of God, but an infinite understanding, (for God could not know himself if his understanding were not infinite,) so nothing could satisfy an infinite understanding but an infinite object. And this suitableness of the properties of God one to another, as it makes them, because infinite, not really to differ from one another, or from his nature itself; so it gives them all rest, blessedness, satisfaction, and self-sufficiency. Hence is God all-sufficient, and eternally blessed in the contemplation and enjoyment of his own excellencies. For self-sufficiency is the fountain of blessedness. Now what is man, that this every way all-sufficient God should mind, regard, and visit him? Hath he any need of him, or his services? Doth his goodness extend to him? Can he profit God as a man profiteth his neighbor? If he sin, what doth he do against him? Or if his transgressions be multiplied what doth he against him? If he be righteous what giveth he unto him? or what receiveth he at his hand? Job xxxv, 6, 7. Nothing but infinite condescension and grace is the ancient fountain of all God's regard to us.

§15. Behold his infinite and eternal *power*! If the power of God in making this or that creature which we behold, be so admirable declaring his sovereignty and the infinite distance of man from him in his best condition, how glorious is it in the whole universe; and in the creation of all things visible and invisible, and that by the secret emanation of omnipotency in a word of command. The art of man will go considerably

far in the framing, fashioning, and ordering of things; but the creating energy that is displayed in the least of God's creatures, infinitely differs from all limited and finite power. There is a peculiar impress of omnipotency upon all the works of God. And what is man that this Almighty Being should be mindful of him! The same reflections may be made on his wisdom and goodness, that shine forth in the works of his hands.

§16. On the other hand, "what is man," as to his extract? A little dust, one made of "the dust of the ground;" that may say to corruption, "thou art my father, and to the worm, thou art my mother, and my sister," Job xviii, 14. His fabric was not one jot of any better materials than theirs. That God put this honor upon him, to breathe into the dust whereof he was made, that he should become "a living soul," is part of that goodness wherein he is so much to be admired. Otherwise we are what God said to Adam, "dust thou art;" poor creature that wouldst be like to God, thou art but dust and no more! and in a becoming sense of this their extraction, did holy men of old abase themselves in the presence of God, as Abraham, Gen. xviii, 32, "How shall I speak unto the Lord that am but dust and ashes?" Poor proud man! who scornest to touch that of which thou art made, and thinkest thyself, I know not what, whilst the remainder of thee lies under the feet of all the creatures which thou despisest. What is this handful of dust that God should regard it? But yet this fabric being erected, perhaps is durable, strong, and abiding, and so may be considerable on that account. But alas! his frailty also is inexpressible, Psalm xc, 5, 6, "Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as asleep; in the morning they are like grass that groweth up; in the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is

cut down and withereth," Job xiv, 1, 3. And dost thou open thine eyes upon such a "one," regard such a poor frail perishing creature? From within, from without, from himself, from all other creatures, and principally from the rage and cruelty of those of the same nature as himself, his misery is great, and his life of short continuance. And God abundantly shews what little weight is to be laid on that duration which man has in this world, in that he takes many from the very womb, who scarce ever beheld the light, into a participation of his own eternal glory.

§17. But still more: this earthly frail man hath made himself yet more unspeakably vile by sin, that sets him at the most awful distance from the glory of God. All these things being put together, they make the condescension of God in remembering man, and setting his heart upon him, exceedingly to be admired and adored. And this also will farther appear, if we might consider what are the blessed effects of this mindfulness. But here our duty lies in studying what God hath revealed of himself; not with curious searchings and speculations, but with holy admiration, reverence, and fear. When these have filled us with wonder, when they have prostrated our spirits before him, and laid our mouths in the dust, when the glory of them shines round about us, and our whole souls are filled with an holy astonishment; then let us take a view of ourselves, our extract, our frailty, our vileness on every account. How poor, how undeserving are we! What is there in us, what is there belonging to us, that is not suited to abase us? Alive one day, and dead another! Quiet one moment, troubled another; fearing, caring, rejoicing causelessly; always sinning, and "in our best condition altogether vanity!" Would we be wise? We are "like the wild ass's colt;" would we be honor-

able? We are “like the beasts that perish.” Would we be strong? We are as “a reed shaken with the wind.” In short, let the result of these thoughts be an holy admiration of God’s infinite love, care, grace, and condescension in having any regard for us, as the psalmist hath given us an excellent example.

§18. *Obs.* 3. The respect, care, love, and grace of God to mankind, expressed in the person and mediation of Jesus Christ, is a matter of singular and eternal admiration. That is what the admiration of the psalmist respects and rests in; and this way of his grace towards us in the person of his Son, assuming our nature into union with himself, is that wherein the exceeding and unspeakable riches of his glory and wisdom are made manifest, Ephes. i, 17—23. God hath in other things set forth his glory; but yet in a very partial manner; one thing hath declared his power, another his goodness and wisdom, and that in part, with reference to that particular about which they have been exercised. But in this he hath drawn forth and displayed all the riches and treasures of his glory, so that his excellencies seem capable of no great exaltation. Now therefore whereunto doth all this tend? Why it is all to give a blessed and eternal inheritance to believers, for the hope and expectation of which they are called by the gospel. And by what way or means is all this brought about? Even by the mighty working of God in Jesus Christ, in his humiliation unto death; and his after exaltation, putting all things under his feet, crowning him with glory and honor. So full of glory, such an object of eternal admiration, is this work of the love and grace of God! which as Peter tells us, the very angels themselves desire to look into, 1 Pet. i, 12.

§19. And this further appears,

1. Because all God's regard of man in this way is a fruit of mere sovereign grace and condescension. It was all of grace, both towards the head and members. The human nature of Christ, neither did, nor could merit the hypostatical union; and this being of inconceivable grace and the foundation of all the consequent fruits of God's regard to us; so must these fruits be also; which therefore leave place for nothing but eternal admiration and thankfulness.

2. Had not God been thus mindful of man, and visited him in the person of the Son incarnate; all partakers of that nature must have utterly perished in their lost condition. And this also renders the grace of it an object of admiration. We are not only to look what God takes us to by this visitation, but to consider also what he delivers us from. Now a great part of that vile and base condition which the psalmist wonders that God should have a regard to, is, that we have "sinned and come short of his glory," and thereby exposed ourselves to eternal misery. In that condition we must have perished for ever, had not God freed us by this visitation. It had been great grace to have taken an innocent, a sinless man into glory; singular grace to have freed a sinner from misery, though he should never be brought to the enjoyment of the least positive good; but to free a sinner from the most inconceivable misery in eternal ruin, and to bring him to the highest happiness in eternal glory, and all this in a way of mere grace; this is to be everlastingly admired!

3. It appeareth, that God is more glorified in the humiliation and exaltation of the Lord Christ, and the salvation of mankind thereby, than in any or all of the works of the first creation. None almost is so

stupid, but that on the first view of the heavens, the sun, moon, and stars, he will confess, that their fabric, beauty, and order is wonderful, and that the glory of their all-wise and omnipotent builder is for ever to be admired in them; but all this comes short of that glory which ariseth from this condescension and grace. And therefore, it may be, the day will come, and that speedily, wherein the heavens and this whole creation shall be utterly dissolved and brought to nothing. For why should they abide as a monument of his power for their sakes, who, enjoying the blessed vision of him, shall see it and know it far more eminently in himself? However, they shall undoubtedly, in a short time, cease as to their present use; but the effects of this regard of God to man shall abide to eternity, and the glory of God therein; and this is the foundation of heaven as a state and condition, as it denotes the glorious presence of God among his saints. Without this there would be no such heaven; all that is there, and all the glory of it depends thereon. Take away this foundation, and all that beauty and glory disappear. Nothing indeed would be taken from God, who ever was, and ever will be eternally blessed in his own self-sufficiency; but the whole theatre which he hath erected for the manifestation of his eternal glory depends on this his holy condescension and grace, which assuredly render them meet for ever to be admired and adored.

§20. In this then let us exercise ourselves. Faith, having infinite, eternal, incomprehensible things proposed to it, acts itself greatly in this admiration. We are every where taught, that we know but imperfectly, "in part," and that we see "darkly" as in a glass. Not that the revelation of these things in the word is dark and obscure, for they are fully and clearly proposed;

but that such is the nature of the things themselves, that we are not in this life able to comprehend them; and therefore, faith doth principally exercise itself in an holy admiration of them. And indeed no love or grace will suit our condition, but that which is incomprehensible. We find ourselves, by experience, standing in need of more grace, goodness, love, and mercy, than we can fully understand. But when that which is suitable, infinite, and incomprehensible is proposed, there all fears are overwhelmed, and faith finds rest with assurance. And if our admiration of these things be an act, an effect, a fruit of faith; it will be of singular use to endear our hearts to God, and to excite them to thankful obedience. For who would not love and delight in the eternal foundation of this inconceivable grace? And what shall we render unto him who hath done more for us, than we are any way able to conceive?

§21. *Obs.* 4. Such was the inconceivable love of Jesus Christ the Son of God, to the souls of men, that he was willing to condescend to any condition for their good. Hence, when the eternal counsel of this whole matter is mentioned, it is said of him as the wisdom of the Father, that he “rejoiced in the habitable parts of the earth, and his delights were with the sons of men,” Prov. viii, 13. He delighted in the counsel of redeeming and saving them by his own humiliation and suffering. And so great was this love of his, that he declined nothing that was proposed to him. This the apostle calls his grace, 2 Cor. viii, 9, “Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.” He condescended to a poor and low condition, and to suffer therein, that we might be made partakers of the durable riches of the



grace of God. Now the Holy Ghost makes an especial application of this truth to us; Phil. ii, 5, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." If this mind was in Christ, should not we endeavor after a readiness and willingness to submit ourselves to any condition for his glory? "Forasmuch then as Christ," saith Peter, "hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind," 1 Pet. iv, 1. Many difficulties will be in our way, many reasonings will rise up against it, if we consult with flesh and blood; but, saith he, "arm yourselves with the same mind that was in Christ;" get your souls strengthened and fortified by grace against all oppositions, that you may follow and imitate him. Some that profess his name will suffer nothing for him; if they may enjoy him or his ways in peace and quietness, well and good; but if persecution arise, immediately they fall away. But what if he had been unwilling to be humbled and suffer for us? If the same mind had been in Christ, as was in us, what had been our state and condition to eternity? In this grace, love, and willingness of Christ, lies the foundation for all our happiness, of all our deliverance from misery and ruin; and shall we reckon ourselves to have an interest therein, and yet find ourselves altogether unwilling to be conformed to him. Besides, the Lord Christ was really rich when he made himself poor for our sakes: he was in the form of God, when he took upon him the form of a servant, and became for us of no reputation; nothing of this was he obliged to but merely on our account. But we are in ourselves really poor, and obnoxious to infinitely more miseries for our own sins, than any thing he calls us to endure for his name. Are we unwilling to suffer a little light transitory trouble in this world from him, without whose sufferings for us we must have suffered

endless misery, whether we would or no? And I speak not so much about suffering itself, as about the mind and frame of spirit wherewith we undergo it.

Some suffer when they cannot avoid it; but so unwillingly, so uncheerfully, as makes it evident they act from no generous principle; they reluctantly submit because they dare not resist their convictions. But the mind that was in Christ will lead us to it out of love to him, with freedom and enlargedness of heart, which is justly required of us.

§22. *Obs. 5.* The blessed issue of the abasement of Jesus Christ, in his exaltation to honor and glory, is an assured pledge of the final glory and blessedness of all that believe in him, whatever difficulties and dangers they may be exercised with in their way. His humiliation, as we have seen, proceeded out of God's condescension and love to mankind; his electing love, the eternal gracious purpose of his will to recover lost sinners, and to bring them to the enjoyment of himself, was the ground of this dispensation; and therefore what he hath done in Christ, is a certain pledge what he will do in and for them also. He is not crowned with glory and honor merely for himself, but that he may be a "captain of salvation," and bring others to a participation of his glory. Blessed is the state and condition, great is the spiritual and eternal security of the church; seeing all things are under the very feet of its Head and Savior,

## VERSE 10.

*For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.*

§1. The propriety and force of the connexion. §2--4. The principal words explained. §5. The subject stated. §6--8. (I.) The design of God to bring many sons to glory. §9. (II.) The means of accomplishing that deep design. §10. (III.) Christ's qualification for this arduous work. §11--13. (IV.) The reason why Christ was to be consecrated by his sufferings. §14--23. Observations, 1. The whole work of bringing the sons to glory is committed to Christ. §24. 2. Christ by suffering hath consecrated the way of suffering §25. 3. Such is the desert of sin, that sinners could not be saved without the sufferings of the Son of God.

§1. **T**HE apostle in the verses foregoing made mention of that which, of all other things, the Jews generally were most offended at, but which was of the greatest importance to be believed; namely, the sufferings of the Messiah: wherein a great part of the discharge of his sacerdotal office (whereunto he here makes a transition) consisted. This his own disciples were slow to believe, Matt. xvi, 22, and chap. xvii, 22, 23; Luke xxiv, 25, 26; and at this the Jews generally stumbled. They thought it strange that the Messiah, the Son of God, the Savior of his people, and captain of their salvation, concerning whom so great and glorious things were promised and foretold, should be brought into so low and despised a condition, and therein suffer and die. Hence they cried unto him on the cross, "If thou be the Christ, come down and save thyself;" intimating, that by his sufferings he was actually proved not to be so; for why any one should suffer, that *could* deliver himself, they saw no reason. Besides, they had inveterate prejudices about the salvation promised by the Messiah, and the way whereby it was to be wrought, arising from their love and over-valuation of temporal or carnal things, with their contempt of things spiritual and eternal. They ex-

pected a deliverance outward, glorious, and kingly in this world, and that to be introduced with arms, power, and a mighty hand. And what should they expect from a Messiah that suffered and died? Wherefore the apostle, having asserted the sufferings of Christ, saw it necessary to proceed to a full confirmation of it.

§2. The proper signification of the words in this verse is much to be heeded, as that which will give us much light into the sense of the whole. "It became him." The import of the first word (*πρεπει*, *debet, convenit dignum est,*) is, *it becometh, it is meet, convenient, or just.* That which becometh any one in his state and condition in a moral sense; as holiness becometh the house, that is, the people of God. The word then signifies that decency and becomingness which justice, reason, and equity require; so that the contrary would be unmeet, because unequal and unjust. Thus every one's duty, that which is morally incumbent on him in his place and station, is that which becomes him; and thence in the New Testament, that which is not (*κατα το πρεπον*) *thus decent*, is condemned as evil, 1 Cor. xi, 13; 1 Tim. ii, 10. And itself is commended as a rule of virtue, Matt. iii, 15; Ephes. v, 3.

"For whom," (*δι ου.*) The particle (*δια,*) with an accusative case, constantly denotes the final cause. And (*δι ου τα παντα*) "by whom are all things." The same particle, with a genitive, denotes the efficient cause. The principal efficiency or supreme production of all things by God is intended in this expression.

§3. The term (*αγαγοντα*) "bringing" is of common use and known signification, but in this place attended with a double difficulty, from a double enallage of the case and tense, in the use of it. First in the case;

for whereas it seems to relate to (*αὐτῷ*) *him*, “it became him in bringing,” it should then regularly be the dative (*αγαγονι*) and not the accusative (*αγαγονια*.) Wherefore an enallage of the case is necessarily to be allowed, unless we suppose a repetition of (*επρεπε*) “it became,” which frequently admits of the accusative case; but the principal author however is unquestionably intended. Again, as to the tense; the word (*αγαγαγοντα*) “bringing” is a participle of the second aorist, which usually denotes the time past; and thence it is translated by many, (*adduxit, adduxerat* and *filiis adductis*) “after he had brought many sons to glory.” But neither did this restraining of the word answer the apostle’s intention. The second aorist (*αγαγαγονια*) then is put for the present (*αγονια*) unless we shall suppose that the act of God here intended was on purpose thus expressed to comprehend “all the sons,” both those that lived before, and those that lived after the sufferings of Christ. In short, it concerns the whole execution of the design of God, for the salvation and glorification of believers, (*Πολλες υἱες*) “many sons,” Jews and Gentiles, all that were by faith to become his sons, and then led into glory:

§4. (*Τον αρχηγον*) “the author.” Wherever this word is used in the New Testament, it is applied to Christ. Acts iii, 5, he is called (*αρχηγος της ζωης*) “the Prince of Life.” And chap. v, 31, God is said to make him (*αρχηγον και σωτηρα*) “a Prince and a Savior;” that is, as here, “the Prince of our salvation.” Heb. xii, 13, the apostle calls him (*τον της πιστηως αρχηγον και τελειωτην*) “the author and finisher of faith,” as we render it; as here God is said (*τελειωσαι τον αρχηγον*) “to finish, or perfect, this author of our salvation.” In this place it is limited by (*σωτηριας*) “salvation,” and thereby suggests the idea of the chief or principal ope-

rator, or worker of that salvation; with a special reference to the kingly or princely power whereunto he was advanced after his sufferings; as he is also absolutely a prince, a ruler, and the author or spring of the whole race and kind of believers, according to the other senses of the word.

§5. There is in the words,

I. A design of God intimated as the foundation of the discourse, which was “to bring many sons unto glory.”

II. The means he fixed on for the accomplishment of that design, namely, the appointing for them “a captain of their salvation.”

III. The especial way of dedicating him to that office, he “made him perfect through sufferings.”

IV. The reason of this his proceeding and dealing with him, “it became him so to do, him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things.”

§6. (I.) The design of God in this whole matter was to bring many sons to glory. And herein the apostle declares the nature of the salvation which was to be wrought by the Messiah, about which the Jews were so greatly mistaken, and consequently about the way whereby it was to be wrought. His purpose was not now to bring his children into a new Canaan, an earthly kingdom, to be effected by might, and power, and arms, but to bring them to glory, eternal glory with himself in heaven; and so it is no wonder if the way whereby this is to be accomplished be quite of another nature than that whereby their temporal deliverance was wrought; by the death and sufferings of the Messiah himself. And here, in reference to this design of God, it is supposed, that some who are created for the glory of God had by sin come short of it, so that without a new way of bringing them to it, it

was impossible that they should ever be made partakers of it. It is also here supposed by the apostle, and is the foundation of all his doctrine concerning the Messiah, that the way whereby God will at length bring them to their destined glory, is by taking them first into a state of sonship and reconciliation. He dealeth not with the Hebrews in this epistle professedly about the conversion of the elect, their introduction into a state of grace and sonship, but of the government of them being already made sons, and their subsequent guidance into glory; and therefore the sufferings of Christ, which absolutely and in themselves are the cause of their sonship and reconciliation, are mentioned here only as the means whereby Christ entered into a condition of leading them to their glorious inheritance. But yet this is not so precisely respected neither, but that the apostle withal intimates the necessity of the sufferings of Christ, as to the whole effect of it, towards the elect. Now these sons are said to be "many;" not all men absolutely, not a few, not the Jews only, which they looked for; but all the elect of God, who are many; Rev. vii, 9.

§7. And this work is here signally assigned by the apostle to God the Father, whose wisdom, love, and grace, believers are principally to eye in the whole work of their salvation wrought out and accomplished by Jesus Christ. For instance: The eternal designation of them to that glory is peculiarly assigned to him; he predestinates them to be conformed to the image of his Son, Rom. viii, 28—30. He was the spring and fountain (as in all other operations of the Deity) of that covenant that was of old between himself and his Son, about the salvation and glory of his elect. He signally gave out the first promise, and afterwards declared, confirmed, and ratified by his oath,

that same covenant wherein all the means of bringing the elect to glory are contained; Gen, iii, 15. He gave and sent his Son to be a savior and redeemer; so that in his whole work, in all that he did and suffered, he obeyed the command, and fulfilled the will of the Father. Him did God the Father seal and set forth, as the scripture every where expreseth it. And our Lord Jesus Christ every where remits us to the consideration of the love, will, and authority of his Father in all that he did, taught, or suffered, so "seeking the glory of God that sent him." Moreover, it is the Father who draws the elect, and enables them to come to his Son, to believe in him, and so obtain life, salvation, and glory by him. "No man," saith our Savior, "can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him," John vi, 4. "No man," no not any one of the elect, can come to Christ, unless the Father, in pursuit of that love from whence it was that he sent the Son, put forth the efficacy of his grace to enable him; and accordingly he reveals him to some, when he is hidden from others, Matt. xi, 25. For the revelation of Christ to the soul is the immediate act of the Father, Matt. xvi, 17. Being reconciled to them by the blood of his Son, he reconciles them to himself, by giving them pardon and forgiveness, without which they cannot come to glory. He is in Christ reconciling us to himself, by the non-imputation or forgiveness of our sins, "forgiving us all our trespasses for Christ's sake," Ephes. vi, 2. He quickens them and sanctifies them by his Spirit, to make them "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light;" that is, for the enjoyment of glory. He that raised up Jesus from the dead, quickens us by his Spirit, Rom. viii, 2. As the great Father of the family he adopts them, and makes them his sons, heirs and co-heirs with Christ, Rom. viii, 14—17; sending into



their hearts the spirit of adoption, enabling them to cry, *Abba Father*, Gal. iv, 6. As the whole right of adopting children is in the Father, so is the authoritative translation of them out of the world and kingdom of Satan into his own family and household, with their investiture in all the rights and privileges thereof. In brief, in bringing the elect to glory, all the sovereign acts of power, wisdom, love, and grace, exerted therein, are peculiarly assigned to the Father, as all ministerial acts are to the Son as mediator. So that there is no reason why he might not be said, by way of eminency, to be the (*αγογευς*) “the leader” or bringer of his sons to glory.

§8. And herein lies a great direction to believers, and a great support for their faith. Peter tells us, that by Christ we do “believe in God that raised him from the dead, and gave him glory, that our faith and hope may be in God,” 1 Pet. i, 21. Jesus Christ considered as mediator is the next, but not the ultimate object of our faith and hope. We so believe in him, as by him to believe in God the Father, whose love is the supreme fountain and spring of our salvation; which the apostle manifests in that double instance of his “raising up Christ,” and “giving of him glory;” thereby declaring himself the principal author of the great work of his mediation. This he directs us to, so to believe in Christ, as that, discerning through him the grace, goodwill, and love of the Father himself towards us, we may be encouraged to fix our faith and hope upon him, seeing he himself loveth us. So that Christ himself had no need to pray for the love of the Father towards us, but only for the communication of the effects of it, John xvi, 26, 27. And we thus place our faith in God the Father, when we conceive of him as the sovereign leader of us to glory, by all the instances before

mentioned. And then doth faith rest in him with delight, complacency, and satisfaction.

§9. (II.) There is in these words intimated the *principal means* that God fixed on for the accomplishment of this wonderful design; it was by "appointing a captain of their salvation." The Jews generally granted, that the Messiah was to be the captain of their salvation; but misunderstanding that salvation; they also mistook the whole nature of his office. The apostle here evidently compares Christ to Joshua, the captain and leader of the people into Canaan. All the sons of God are put under his conduct and guidance, as the people of old were under the rule of Joshua, to bring them into the glory promised them in the covenant made with Abraham. And he is called their (*αρχηγος*) *prince, ruler, and captain*, or the *author* of their salvation, because of his authority and right to rule over them in order to their salvation; his actual conducting of them by his example, spirit, and grace, through all the difficulties of their warfare; and as he procured salvation for them. So that the expression denotes both his acquisition of salvation itself, and his conduct in leading the people of God to the enjoyment of it. And the Holy Ghost hereby also intimates, that the way whereby God will bring the sons to glory, is full of difficulties, perplexities, and oppositions, (as that of the Israelites into Canaan also was) so that they have need of such a captain and guide as Christ is, to insure their success. They only, perish in the wilderness, and die in their sins, who, either out of love to the flesh pots of Egypt, the pleasures of this world, or being terrified with the hardships of the warfare which he calls them to, refuse to go up under his victorious banner and command.

§10. (III.) There is expressed in these words the special way whereby God qualified the Lord Christ for this arduous office. To understand this aright, we must recollect, that the apostle speaks not here of the “redemption” of the elect absolutely, but of “bringing them to glory,” when they are made sons in an especial manner; and therefore he treats not absolutely of the designation and consecration of Christ for his office of mediator in general, but with respect to that one part, and the execution of it, as Joshua led the Israelites into Canaan. This will help to explain what act of God towards the Lord Christ is intended in this phrase, (τελειωσαι αυτον δια παθηματων) “to perfect him through sufferings.” The word (τελειωσαι) in this place signifies to *consecrate*, to *dedicate*, to *sanctify* for an office, or some special part or act of an office. This is the proper meaning of the word. Hence the ancients called baptism (τελειωσις) *consecration* to the sacred service of Christ. Nor is this word used in any other sense in this whole epistle, wherein it is often used, when applied to Christ; see chap. v, 9; chap. vii, 28. And thus was the use of the word among the heathen, signifying the initiation and consecration of a man into the mysteries of their religion, to be a leader unto others. The Lord Christ must be consecrated by his own sufferings and the sacrifice of himself.

§11. (IV.) There remains yet to be considered, the *reason* why the captain of our salvation was to be consecrated by his sufferings; “It became God so to deal with him.” Which he amplifies by that description of him, “For whom are all things, and by whom are all things.” This (το προεπον) *becomingness*, whatever it be, ariseth hence, that God is he “for whom are all things, and by whom are all things.” It became him as he is so, and because he is so. There is no assignable reason for this addi-

tional consideration of God in this matter, but as it expresses the cause why it became him to do what is here ascribed to him. Now the description of God in these words, is plainly of him as the first cause and last end of all things; the governor, ruler, and judge, with respect to that order and law of their creation which all things were to observe. And this government of all things, taking care that they are of God, so they should be for him, is what the apostle principally respects. Therefore it became God, as the governor, ruler, and judge of all things, to consecrate Jesus Christ by his sufferings; which must be farther explained.

§12. Man being made an intelligent creature, had a rule of moral obedience given him. This he was to observe to the glory of his Creator and Lawgiver, as the condition of his continued favor. But how man, having broken the law of his creation, and therein come short of the glory of God, might be made again partaker of it, is the grand inquiry. God can be no otherwise considered but as the supreme governor and judge; and that property of his nature which he exerted principally in this state of things, was (*justitia regiminis*) "the righteousness of his government." And this righteousness is that on account of which it was meet for him, or "it became him" to bring the sons to glory by the sufferings of the captain of their salvation; it was just, equal, and therefore indispensably necessary that he should do so. Supposing that man, created in the image of God, capable of yielding obedience, according to the law concreated with him, and written in his heart, which obedience was his being morally for God, as he was from him; supposing, moreover, that he by sin had broken this law, and so was no longer for God, according to the primitive order and law of his creation; supposing also, notwithstanding all

this, that God in his infinite grace and love intended to bring some of these fallen creatures to the enjoyment of himself, and by a new appointment to be for him again: supposing I say, these things, which are all here supposed by our apostle, and were granted by the Jews, "it became the *justice* of God," that is, it was so just, right, and meet, that the Judge of all the world, who doth right, could no otherwise do, than cause him who was to be the means and author of this recovery of men to a new condition, to suffer in their stead. For whereas the *vindictive justice* of God, which is the respect of the universal rectitude of his holy nature to the deviation of his rational creatures from the law of their creation, required, that, at any rate, the deviation should be revenged, and that themselves be either brought into a new way of being for God, or else made to glorify him by their sufferings, when they had refused to do so by obedience; it was necessary, I say, on that account, that if they were to be delivered from that condition, the Divine author of their deliverance should suffer for them.

§13. And this excellently suits the design of the apostle, which is to prove the necessity of the sufferings of the Messiah, which the Jews so stumbled at. For if the justice of God required that it should be so, how could it be dispensed with? Would they have God unjust? Shall he forego the glory of his righteousness and holiness, to please them in their presumption and prejudices? It is true, indeed, if God had intended no salvation for his sons but one that was temporal, like that of old under Joshua, there had been no need at all of the sufferings of the captain of their salvation. But they being such, as in themselves had sinned, and come short of the glory of God, and the salvation intended them being spiritual, consisting in a

new ordering of them for God, and the bringing of them to the eternal enjoyment of himself in glory, there was no way to maintain the honor and justice of Jehovah, but by the Redeemer's meritorious sufferings. And as here lay the great mistake of the Jews, so the denial of this *condecency* of God's justice, as to the sufferings of the Messiah, is the (*προσολον ψευδος*) "master error" of the Socinians. The apostle says not, that it became an arbitrary decree of God, but it became himself as the Supreme Ruler and Judge of all; and herein we have with our apostle discovered the great, indispensable, and fundamental cause of the sufferings of Christ.

§14. *Obs.* 1. That the whole work of saving the sons of God from first to last, their guidance and conduct to glory, is committed to the Lord Jesus: whence he is constantly to be eyed by all believers, in the concernments of their faith, obedience, and consolation. "Behold," saith the Lord, "I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people," Isa. lv, 4. A *witness*, to testify the truth, in revealing the mind and will of God; a *leader*, going before them as a prince and captain, as the word signifies, and a *commander*, that gives out laws and rules for their obedience. God hath set him as a lord over his whole house, chap. iii, 5; and committed all the management of its momentous concerns to him. There is no person but is under his rule and inspection; neither is there any circumstance that relates to these "sons," in their passage towards glory, whereby they may be advanced or hindered in their way, but the care thereof is committed to Christ, as the care of the whole army lies on the general or prince of the host. This the prophet sets out in his type, Eliakim, Isa. xxii, 20—24, "He is fastened as a nail in a sure

place; and all the glory of the house, and every vessel of it, from the greatest unto the least, is hanged on him," the weight of all, the care of all is upon him. When the people came out of Egypt with Moses, they were numbered unto him; and he being the administrator of the law, *they all died* in the wilderness; but they were delivered again by tale and number to Joshua, the type of Christ; and not one of them failed entering into Canaan. And,

§15. As to the *manner* in which Christ, as the faithful captain of salvation, dischargeth this trust, it is with care, tenderness, and power. *With care and watchfulness.* Oh, how great an encouragement is this to adhere to him, and to follow him in the whole course of our obedience! This puts life into soldiers and gives them a happy security, when they know their commander is continually careful of them. *With tenderness and love.* Indeed Sion is ready sometimes to complain, that she is "forgotten." The "sons," in the great distresses, afflictions, persecutions, and temptations, that may befall them in their way to glory, are apt to think they are disregarded, that they are left, as it were, to shift for themselves, and to wrestle with their difficulties by their own strength and wisdom, which they know to be a thing of nought. But this fear is vain and ungrateful; for whilst they are found in the way, following the captain of their salvation, it is utterly impossible that his watchfulness and care, love and tenderness, should in any instance be wanting. *With power, authority, and majesty;* Mic. v, 4, "He shall stand and rule in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God, and they shall abide." There is nothing so high, so great, so mighty, that lies in the way of his dependent followers, but it must stoop to his authority, and give place to his

power. The whole kingdom of Satan, the strongholds of sin, the high imaginations of unbelief, the strength and malice of the world, all sink before him. And thence they are described so glorious and successful in their way, Mic. ii, 13, "The breaker is come up before them, they have broken up and passed through the gate, and are gone out by it, and their king shall pass before them, and the Lord on the head of them." Many obstacles lie in their way, but they shall break through them all, because of their king and lord who goes before them. And though their sufferings and difficulties may somewhat tarnish or retard their outward profession, yet they shall not in the least hinder them in their real progress towards glory. Their captain goes before them with power and authority, and breaks up all the obstructions that lie in their way, and gives them a free and abundant entrance into the kingdom of God, even their God and Father.

§16. As the manner, so the acts of this Divine antecedent may be considered. He goes before them, guides and directs them, supplies them with strength, subdues their enemies, avenges their sufferings, and provides a reward.

1. He goes before them. This is principally the duty of a captain or leader, to go before his soldiers. Hence they that went to war, were said of old to "go at the feet" of their commanders, Judges iv, 10, "Barak went up and ten thousand men at his feet," that is, followed him, going where he went before them. And this also became the captain of the Lord's hosts, even to go before his people in their whole way; not putting them on any enterprise or hardship through which himself passed not before them. As to *obedience*; he himself was made under the law, and learned obedience, fulfilling all righteousness. Though he was in



his own person above the law, yet he submitted himself to every law of God, and righteous law of men; that he might afford a complete example to those who are of necessity subject to the law. "Christ," saith Peter, "hath suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps;" that is, be ready and prepared patiently to suffer when we are called thereunto, as he explains himself, chap. iv, "Forasmuch as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves, therefore, with the same mind," that you may follow him in the same way. And this our apostle presseth much in this epistle, chap. xii, 2, 3, "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame;" for "consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." The sons of God are sometimes ready to think it strange, that they should fall into calamity and distress, and are apt to say with Hezekiah, "Remember, O Lord, we beseech thee, how we have walked before thee in truth, and with an upright heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight, and weep sore;" supposing this might have freed them from oppositions and persecutions; and, as Gideon, though the angel told him that the Lord was with him, they exclaim, "Whence is all this evil come upon us?" For, notwithstanding many favorable tokens, yet if their troubles continue, if they are not in their season removed, they begin to be "weary and faint in their minds." But, saith the apostle, consider the captain of your salvation, he hath set you a different example; notwithstanding all his sufferings he fainted not. The Jews have a saying, that "the third part of afflictions and troubles that shall be in the world, belong to the Messiah." But our apostle, who

knew better than they, makes *all* the afflictions of the church to be "the afflictions of Christ," Col. i, 24; who both before underwent them in his own person, and led the way for all that should follow him. And as the obedience of Christ, which is our pattern, doth incomparably exceed whatever we can attain to; so the sufferings of Christ, which are our example, did incomparably exceed all that they shall be called to endure. Our pattern is excellent, inimitable in the substance and parts of it; unattainable and inexpressible in its degrees; and he is the best proficient who makes the nearest advances to it. But what is the end of all this obedience, and all these sufferings? Does not death lie at the door, as the ocean whereinto all these streams run, and seem to swallow them up, as lost for ever? No; for this captain of our salvation is gone before us in passing through death, and entering into glory. He hath shewed us in his own resurrection, that great pledge of our immortality, that death is not the end of our course, but a passage to another more abiding condition. He promiseth, that whosoever believeth on him, they shall not be lost, or perish, or be consumed by death, but that he will raise them up at the last day. John vi, 39, 40. But how shall this be confirmed to them? Death looks dreadful and ghastly, as a lion that devoureth all that comes within his reach: why saith Christ, Behold me, entering his jaws, passing through his power, rising from under his dominion; and, fear not, so shall it be with you also. The captain of our salvation, after he had suffered, "entered into glory;" and that as our leader or forerunner, Heb. vi, 20. He is gone before us, to give us the highest evidence what is the final issue of our obedience and sufferings. In all this he is a captain and leader to the sons of God.

§17. 2. He guides and directs them in their way. They know not the way that leads to happiness and glory; and they want ability to discern it aright, when it is shewed them; and in both they are relieved and assisted by their glorious leader. In the first by his word; in the latter by his Spirit. Had there been any thing belonging to their way which he had not revealed to them, he had not been their perfect captain of salvation. And men do nothing but presumptuously derogate from his glory, who will be adding and imposing their prescriptions about this way. He gives them eyes to see, as well as provides paths for them to walk in. It had been to no purpose to have declared the way, if he had not also given them light to see it. And by this means he is to us, what he was to the church in the wilderness, when he went before them in "a pillar of fire," to guide them in their way, and to shew them where they should rest. And herein lies no small part of the discharge of our Lord's office towards us, as the captain of our salvation. Whatever acquaintance we have with the way to glory, we have it from him alone; and whatever ability we have to discern the way, he is the fountain and author of it. For these encouraging purposes, was he designed and called. And doth not he deservedly wander, yea deservedly perish, who in war will neglect the orders and directions of his general, and yet will attend to every idle tale of silly men pretending to shew him a way that they have found out, better than that which his captain hath described for him?

§18. 3. He supplies him with strength by his grace, that they may be able to pass on their way. They have much work lying before them; much to do, much to suffer; and without him they can do nothing, John xv, 5. Wherefore he watcheth over them,

“to succor them that are tempted,” Heb. ii, 18; and to administer help to them all “in time of need,” chap. iv, 17. And hence they who have “no might,” no sufficiency, can “do all things through Christ that strengtheneth them,” Phil. iv, 13. Nothing is too hard for them, nothing can prevail against them, because of the constant supplies of grace, which the captain of their salvation communicates unto them. And this makes the ways of the gospel marvellous, both to the world and to believers themselves. *It is marvellous to the world.* Their life is, “hid with Christ in God,” Col. iii, 3. And they have “a new name that no man knoweth,” Rev. ii, 17. The world seeing poor, mean, weak, contemptible creatures, willing, ready, and able to suffer, to endure, and even to die for the name of Christ, stand astonished, not knowing where their great strength lies; as the Philistines did at the might of Samson, whom they beheld with their eyes, as another man. He gives them the spirit of truth, which the world neither sees nor knows, John xiv, 17, and therefore wonders from whence they have their ability and constancy. They cry, What, will nothing turn these poor foolish creatures off their way? They try them one way, and then another; add one weight of affliction and oppression unto another, and think surely this will effect their design; but they find themselves deceived, and know not whence it is. *It is marvellous to believers themselves.* When they consider their own frailty and weakness, how ready they are to faint, how often they are surprised, and withal take a prospect of what opposition lies against them, from indwelling sin, Satan, and the world, which they are acquainted with, in several instances of their power and prevalency, they neither know how they are kept so long in their course as they have done; nor

how they shall continue: but they are relieved when they come to the gospel. There they see whence their preservation proceeds. They see this captain of their salvation in whom is the fulness of the Spirit, and to whom are committed all the stores of grace, supplying them daily and hourly as the matter requires. As the captain in an army doth not at once give out to his soldiers the whole provision that is needful for their way and undertaking; which if he should, most of them would soon imprudently waste it, and so quickly perish for want; but he keeps provisions for them all in his stores, and distributes to them according to their daily necessities; even so deals this great leader with the sons of God. He keeps the stores of grace and spiritual strength in his own hand; and from thence imparts unto them according as they stand in need.

§19. 4. He subdues their enemies. Many enemies they have, and unless they are conquered and subdued they can never enter into glory. Satan, the world, death, and sin are the chief, or heads of them, and all these are subdued by Christ; and that two ways; in his own person for them, and by his grace in them. *In his own person for them*; for they all attempted him, and failed in their enterprise, John xiv, 30. He "bruised the serpent's head," Gen. iii, 15; and "destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." Destroyed his power in a glorious and triumphant manner. "He spoiled principalities and powers, and made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in his cross." He also overcome the world, John xvi, 33, "Be of good cheer," saith he, "I have overcome the world." Both itself and the prince of it were put under his feet. Death also was subdued by him; he swallowed it up in victory, 1 Cor. xv, 54. He plucked

out the tyrant's sting, broke his power, disannulled his peremptory law, when he shook it off and rose from under it. Sin also set upon him in his temptations, but was utterly foiled; as all sin is destroyed in its very being, where it is not obeyed. And this was for the advantage of the sons of God. For he hath given them encouragement in shewing them that their enemies are not invincible; their power is not uncontrollable, their law not peremptory or eternal; but that having been once conquered, they may be the more easily dealt with. They know also, that all these enemies set upon his person as the great defender of the faithful in their quarrel; so that although they were not conquered by them in their own persons, yet they were conquered in their cause; and they are called in to be sharers in the victory, although they were not engaged in the battle. They moreover know, that he subdued them by God's ordinance and appointment, as their representative, declaring in his person who is the head, what should be accomplished in every one of his members. And by his personal conquest over them, he hath left them weak, maimed, disarmed, and utterly deprived of that power which they had to hurt and destroy before he engaged with them. For he hath thereby deprived them of all their right and title to exercise their enmity against; or dominion over the sons of God. Before his dealing with them, they had a certain right over mankind. Satan to rule, the world to vex, sin to enslave, death to destroy, and give up its prey to hell. And all this right was enrolled in the law and hand-writing of ordinances which was against us. This was cancelled by Christ, nailed to the cross, never to be pleaded more, Col. ii, 14. And when they have lost their right and title to any thing, whatever their strength be, they are greatly weakened. But he

hath herein deprived them of their strength also. He took away the strength of sin as a law, and the sting of death in sin, the arms of the world in the curse, and the power of Satan in his works and strong holds.

§20. But this is not all, he not only subdues these enemies for them, but also by his grace in them. "Thanks be to God," saith the apostle, "who giveth us the victory by Jesus Christ," 1 Cor. xv, 57. He enables us in our persons to conquer all these enemies. "Nay," saith he, "in all these things we are more than conquerors," Rom. viii, 37; because we have more assurance of success, more assistance in the conflict, more joy in the trial, than any other conquerors have: or, we do not only conquer, but triumph also. He tells believers in reference to Satan, that they have "overcome the wicked one," 1 John ii, 13, 14. And shews how it came to pass that they should be able to do so, chap. iv, 7. It is because "greater is he that is in them, than he that is in the world." The good spirit which he hath given them for their help and assistance, is infinitely greater and more powerful than that evil spirit which rules in the children of disobedience. And by this means is Satan bruised even under their feet. A conflict indeed we must have with them; we must wrestle with principalities and powers in heavenly places, but the success is indubitable through the assistance we receive from this captain of our salvation. The world is also subdued in them and by them, 1 John v, 4, "Whosoever is born of God overcometh the world, and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Faith will effectually and infallibly do this work; it never failed in it, and never will. He that believeth shall overcome; the whole strength of Christ is engaged for him. Sin is the worst,

and most obstinate of all their enemies. This puts them hard to it in the battle, and makes them cry out for aid and help, Rom. vii, 24. But against this also they receive strength, so as to carry the day. As to its reign and dominion it is perfectly defeated for the present, Rom. vi, 14. The means of its rule is the authority of the law over us; that being removed, and our souls put under the conduct of grace, the reign of sin comes to an end. Nor shall it condemn us, Rom. viii, 1. And what can it then do? Where is the voice of this oppressor? It abides, (O reviving thought!) it abides but for a short season, and that to endure and die. Death also contends against us by its own sting, and our fear; but the former, by the grace of Christ, is taken from it; the latter we are delivered from, and so have the victory over it. And all this is the work of the captain of our salvation for us and in us. Again,

§21. 5. He not only conquers all their enemies, but he avenges their sufferings upon them, and will punish their oppressors for their enmity and opposition. And though these enemies prevail not absolutely nor finally against the sons of God; yet by their temptations, persecutions, and oppressions, they put them oftentimes to unspeakable hardships, trouble, and sorrow. This the captain of their salvation will not take at their hands, but will avenge upon them all their ungodly endeavors from the lowest to the highest of them. Some of them he will deal with in this world, but he hath appointed a day wherein not one of them shall be able to escape. See Rev. xx, 10, 14, Devil, and beast, and false prophet, and death, and hell, shall altogether be banished into the lake of fire.

§22. 6. He provides for the Christian soldier a *reward*, a celestial crown. He is gone before the adopt-



ed and highly favored sons into heaven, to make ready their glory, to prepare a place for them, and he will come ere long to receive them to himself, "that where he is, there they may be also," John xiv, 2, 3. When he hath given them the victory, he will take them to himself, even to his throne, Rev. iii, 22, and as a righteous judge will give them "a crown of righteousness and glory," 2 Tim. iv, 8. Thus is the whole work of conducting the sons of God to glory, from first to last, committed to this great captain of their salvation; and thus doth he discharge his office and trust therein; and blessed are all they who are under his leading and guidance!

§23. And should not all this teach us to betake ourselves to him, and to rely upon him in the whole course of our obedience, and all the passages thereof? What should hinder us from betaking ourselves unto him continually? Is our trouble so small, are our duties so ordinary, that we can wrestle with them, or perform them in our own strength? Alas! we can do nothing, not think a good thought, nor endure a reproachful word. And whatever we do, or endure of ourselves, is all lost; for in us dwelleth no good thing. Or are our distresses so great, our temptations so many, our corruptions so strong, that we begin to say, There is no hope? Is any thing too hard for the captain of our salvation? Hath he not already conquered all our enemies? Is he not able to subdue all things by his power? Shall we faint while Jesus Christ lives and reigns? But it may be we have looked for help and assistance, and it hath not answered our expectation, so that we now begin to faint and despond. Sin is not subdued, the world is still triumphant; and Satan rageth as much as ever; his temptations are ready to pass over our souls. But have we sought for his help

and assistance in a due manner, with faith and perseverance; for right ends, his glory and the advantage of the gospel? Have we taken a right measure of what we have received? Or do we complain without a cause? Let us not judge according to outward appearance, but judge righteous judgment. What is it to us if the world triumph, if Satan rage, if sin tempt and vex; it is not promised that it should be otherwise. But are we forsaken? Are we not kept from being prevailed against? Moreover, if we ask amiss, or for improper ends, or know not what we receive, or think because the strength of enemies appears to be great, we must fail and be ruined; let us not complain of our captain; for all these things arise from our own unbelief. Let our application to him be according to his command, our expectations from him according to the promise; our experience of what we receive be measured by the rule of the word, and we shall find, that we have all grounds of assurance that we can desire. Let us then in every condition "look unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith," who hath undertaken the leading of us in the whole course of our obedience from first to last, and we shall not need to faint, nor shall we ever fail. And if we neglect him, his example, his direction, his teaching, it is no wonder if we pine away under our distresses.

§24. *Obs. 2.* The Lord Christ, being consecrated and perfected through sufferings, hath consecrated the way of suffering for all that follow him in their march to glory. All complaints of sufferings, all despondencies under them, all fears of them in prospect, are rendered unjust and unreasonable, by the sufferings of Christ. It is surely right that they should be contented with his lot here, who desire to be received into his glory hereafter. To elucidate the above observa-

tion, and to reconcile us to our lot of sufferings in following the captain of our salvation, we should consider, that they are made necessary and unavoidable. The apostle tells believers, that they are "predestinated to be conformed to the image of the Son of God," Romans viii, 29. And no small part of this conformity consists in their afflictions and sufferings. The head having passed through them, there is a measure of afflictions belonging to the body, which every member is to bear his share of, Col. ii, 24. And the Lord Jesus himself hath given us this law, that every one who will be his disciple must "take up his cross and follow him." Discipleship and the cross are inseparably connected, by the unchangeable law and constitution of Christ himself. And the gospel is full of warnings and instructions to this purpose; that none may complain they are surprised, or that any thing did befall them in the course of their profession, which they looked not for. Men may deceive themselves or others with vain hopes and expectations, but the gospel deceiveth none; it tells them plainly beforehand, that "through many tribulations they must enter into the kingdom of God," and that "they who will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecutions." But we would be children and not be chastised; we would be gold and not be tried; we would overcome, and not be put to fight and contend; we would be Christians, and not suffer! But all these things are contrary to the irrevocable law of our profession.

Again: All sufferings for the gospel are now made honorable. The sufferings of Christ himself were indeed ignominious, and that not only in the esteem of men, but also in the nature of them, and by God's constitution. They were part of the curse, as it is written, "Cursed is he that hangeth on a tree." And as

such our Lord considered them, when he wrestled with and conquered the shame as well as the sharpness of them. But he hath rendered all the sufferings of his people for his sake very honorable in themselves, whatever they are in the reputation of a blind and perishing world. Hence the apostle rejoiced that they had the honor to "suffer shame for his name," Acts v, 41. That is, the things which the world looked upon as shameful, but themselves knew to be honorable. When Moses came to make a right judgment concerning this matter, he "esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt," Heb. xi, 29.

Beside, they are made useful and profitable. The Lord Jesus Christ, by consecrating our sufferings as our way of following him, hath quite altered their nature and tendency, he hath made them good, useful, and profitable. He hath thereby cut them off from their old stock of wrath and the curse, and planted them on that of love and good-will. He hath taken them off from the covenant of works, and translated them into that of grace. He hath turned their course from death towards life and immortality; mixing his grace, love, and wisdom, with these bitter waters, he hath made them sweet and wholesome. And if we would benefit by them, we must always have regard to this consecration of them.

He hath also made them safe. Never did a believer perish by afflictions or persecutions, never was real gold or silver consumed or lost in this furnace. Hypocrites, indeed, and false professors, the fearful and unbelieving, are discovered by them, and stripped of their hopes: but they that are disciples indeed, are never safer than in this way, and that because it is consecrated for them. Sometimes, it may be, through

their unbelief, and want of heeding the captain of their salvation, they are wounded and cast down by them for a season, but they are still in the way. Nay, is it not only absolutely a safe way, but comparatively more safe than the way of prosperity.

§25. *Obs.* 3. Such is the desert of sin, and such is the immutability of Divine justice, that there was no way possible to bring sinners unto glory, but by the death and sufferings of the Son of God, who undertook to be the captain of their salvation. It would have been "unbecoming" God, the supreme governor of all the world, to have passed by the desert of sin without this satisfaction. That the Son of God who "did no sin," in whom the Father was always well pleased on account of his obedience, should suffer and die, and that under the sentence and curse of the law, is a great and astonishing mystery; all the saints of God admire it, and the angels desire to look into it. What demonstration of the glory of justice can arise from punishing an innocent person, who might have been spared, and yet all the ends of his being so punished to have been otherwise answered? And to say that one drop of Christ's blood was sufficient to redeem the world, is derogatory to the goodness, wisdom, and righteousness of God, in causing not only the whole to be shed, but also his soul to be made an offering for sin, which was altogether needless, if that were true. The truth is, God by a mere free act of his love and grace designed the Lord Jesus Christ to be the way and means for the saving of sinners; while he might, without the least impeachment of the glory of any of his essential properties, have suffered all mankind to have perished under that penalty they had justly incurred. But on supposition of any being redeemed, the justice of God required, that he should lay on the Redeemer

the punishment due to those whose cause he had espoused. It became the nature of God, or the essential properties of his nature indispensably required, that sin should be punished with death in the sinner, or in his surety; and, therefore, if he would bring any sons to glory, the captain of their salvation must undergo sufferings and death to make satisfaction for them. God punisheth sin suitably to the principle of his nature, so that he cannot do otherwise; yet so, as that for the manner, measure, and season, they depend on the constitution of his wisdom and righteousness, assigning a "meet recompense of reward" to every transgression. God cannot at all be to sin and sinners as a devouring fire unless it be in the principle of his nature indispensably to take vengeance on them. In that proclamation of his name, wherein he declared many blessed eternal properties of his nature, he adds this among the rest; that "he will by no means clear the guilty," *Exod. xxxiv, 7*. This his nature, his eternal holiness, requireth that the guilty be by no means cleared. So Joshua instructs the people in the nature of this holiness of God; *chap. xxix, 19*, "Ye cannot serve the Lord, for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions, nor your sins." That is, if you continue in your sins, if there be not a way to free you from them, it is in vain for you to have any thing to do with this God; for he is holy and jealous, and will therefore certainly destroy you for your iniquities. Now if such be the nature of God, that with respect thereunto he cannot but punish sin in whomsoever it be found; then the suffering of every sinner, in his own person, or by his surety, doth not depend on a mere free voluntary constitution, nor is resolved merely into the veracity of God, in his commination or threatening, but is antecedently neces-

sary; unless we would have the nature of God changed, that sinners may be freed. And thus the necessity of the suffering and satisfaction of Christ, if sinners be brought to glory, is resolved into the holiness and nature of God; he being such a God as he is, it could not be otherwise. The same truth is manifest from other considerations.

§26. What God doth because he is righteous, is necessary to be done. And if it be just with God in respect of his essential justice to punish sin, it would be unjust not to do it; for to condemn the innocent, and acquit the guilty, is equally unjust. Justice is an eternal and unalterable rule, and what is done according to it, is necessary; it cannot be otherwise, and justice not be impeached. That which is to be done with respect to justice, must be done; or he that is to do it is unjust. Thus it is said to be "a righteous thing with God to render tribulation to sinners," 2<sup>d</sup> Thes. i, 6, because he is righteous; so that the contrary would be unjust, not answering his righteousness. God is said, Rom. i, 18, to have "declared his righteousness" by an example in the sufferings of Christ; which indeed was the greatest instance of the severity and inexorableness of justice against sin, that God ever gave. And this he did, "that he might be just," as well as gracious and merciful in the forgiveness of sin. Now if the justice of God did not require that sin should be punished in the Mediator, how did God give an instance of his justice in his sufferings? for nothing can be declared, but in and by that which it requires; for to say, that God shewed his righteousness in doing that which might have been omitted without the least impeachment of his righteousness, is in this matter bold and dangerous.

Again: God is the Supreme Governor and Judge of all. To him, as such, it belongeth to do right. So

saith Abraham, Gen. xviii, 25, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Undoubtedly he will do so, it belongs to him so to do; for, saith the apostle, "Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance, God forbid; for then how shall God judge the world?" Rom. iii, 5, 6. Right judgment in all things belongs to the universal rectitude of God, as the Supreme Governor and Judge of the world. Now the goodness or the righteousness of all things consists in observing that place and order which God in their creation allotted to them, whereon he pronounced they were "very good." And it belongs to the government of God to take care that this order be preserved for the good of the whole; or if it be in any thing transgressed, not to leave all things in confusion, but to reduce them into some new order and subjection to himself. That this primitive order was broken by sin we all know. What shall now the Governor of all the world do? Shall he leave all things in disorder and confusion? Cast off the work of his hands, and suffer all things to run at random? Would this become the Righteous Governor of all the world? What then is to be done to prevent this confusion? Nothing remains, but that he who brake the first order by sin, should be subdued into a new one by punishment. This brings him into subjection to God upon a new account. And to say that God might have let his sin go unpunished, is to say, that he might not be righteous in his government, nor do that which is necessary for the good, beauty, and order of the whole. Farther,

§27. There is no common presumption engrafted in the hearts of men, concerning any free act of God in this matter, and which might have been otherwise. No free decree or act of God is, or can be known to any of the children of men, but by revelation; much less have they all of them universally an inbred per-



suasion concerning any such act or actings. But of the natural properties of God, and of his acting suitably thereunto, there is a secret light and persuasion engrafted on the hearts of all men by nature. At least those things of God, whereof there is a natural and indelible character in the hearts of all men, are necessary and essential to him. Now that God is just, and that therefore he will punish our sin, is an inbred presumption of nature, that can never be rooted out of the minds of men. All sinners have an inbred apprehension that God is displeased with sin, and that punishment is due to it. They cannot but know, that "it is the judgment of God that they who commit sin are worthy of death." And, therefore, though they have not the law written to instruct them, yet "their thoughts accuse them" upon sinning, Rom. i, 14, 15; that is, their consciences; for conscience is the judgment that a man makes of himself in reference to the judgment of God. And therefore all nations who retained any knowledge of a Deity, constantly invented some way and means whereby they thought they might expiate sin, and appease the God that they feared. All which manifests that the punishment of sin inseparably follows the nature of God, and such properties thereof as men have a natural notion and presumption of. For if it depended merely in the will of God, and his faithfulness in the accomplishing of that threatening and constitution, whereof they had no knowledge, they could not have had such an immoveable and unconquerable apprehension of it.

§28. And this fully discovers the vile and horrid nature of sin. Fools, as the wise man tells us, make a mock of it. Stifling for awhile their natural convictions, they act as if sin were a thing of nought; at least a thing not so horrible as some represent it. And

few there are who endeavor aright to obtain a true notion of it; contenting themselves in general, that it is a thing that ought not to be. What direct opposition it stands in to the nature, properties, rule, and authority of God, they consider not. But the last day will discover the true nature of it; when all eyes shall see what it deserves in the judgment of God, which is according to righteousness and truth. Is it a small thing for a creature to break that order which God at first placed him and all things in? To cast off the rule and authority of God, to endeavor to dethrone him, so that he cannot continue to be the supreme moral Governor and Judge of all the world, unless he will punish it? Is it a small thing to set up that which hath an utter inconsistency with the holiness and righteousness of God; so that if it go free, God cannot be holy and righteous? If these things will not *now* sink into the minds of men; if they will not learn the severity of God in this matter from the law, on the very threatening and curse of which he had impressed the image of his holiness and justice, they will learn it all in hell. Why doth God thus threaten sin and sinners? Why hath he prepared an eternity of vengeance and torment for them? Is it because he merely would do so? Nay, but because it could not be otherwise, God being invariably holy and righteous as he is. Men may thank themselves for death and hell; they are no more than sin hath made necessary, unless God should cease to be holy, righteous, and the Judge of all; or by unmerited and unfathomable mercy find out a ransom. And this appears most eminently in the cross of Christ; for God gave in him an instance of his righteousness, and of the desert of sin. Sin being imputed to the only Son of God, he could not be spared. If he be made sin, he must be made a curse;

if he will take away our iniquities, he must make his soul an offering for sins, and bear the punishment due to them. Obedience in all duties will not do it; intercession and prayers will not do; sin required another manner of expiation. Nothing but undergoing the wrath of God, and the curse of the law, and therein answering what the eternal justice of God required, will effect that end. How can God spare sin in his enemies, who could not spare it on his only Son? Had it been possible, this cup should have passed from him; but this could not be, and God continue righteous. These things, I say, will give us an insight into the nature of sin, and the horrible provocation wherewith it is attended. And this also opens the mystery of the wisdom, love, and grace of God in the salvation of sinners. This is that which he will for ever be admired in; a way he hath found out to exercise grace, and satisfy justice, at the same time, and by the same person; sin shall be punished, yet grace exercised; sinners shall be saved to the uttermost, yet justice exalted to the highest degree in the cross of Christ!

## VERSES 11—13.

*For both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren; saying, I will declare Thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee. And again, I will put my trust in Him: and again, behold I and the children which God hath given me.*

§1. The words introduced and the subject stated. §2. (I.) The mutual relation of Christ and his people. §3. (II.) Wherein consists their oneness. §4. (III.) In consequence of which he is not ashamed of them. §5—7. (IV.) Corroborating scripture testimonies. §8. Observations, 1 All the children, before their union to Christ, are unholy §9 v. Christ sanctifies all whom he brings to glory §10. 3. It is a marvellous condescension in Christ not to be ashamed of us. §11. What was principally on the heart of Christ in his sufferings, was to declare the love and grace of God to men. §12. Which is a frame of mind indispensably necessary for ministers.

§1. **T**HE great reason or ground of the necessity of Christ's sufferings hath been declared. It "became"

God that he should suffer. But it doth not yet appear on what grounds this suffering of his could be beneficial to the sons to be brought to glory. It was the sinner himself against whom the law denounced the judgment of death. And although the Lord Christ, undertaking to be a captain of salvation to the sons of God, might be willing to suffer for them, yet what reason is there that the punishment of one should be accepted for the sin of another? Let it be granted, that the Lord Christ had an absolute and sovereign power over his own life, and all the concernments of it, in the nature which he assumed; as also, that he was willing to undergo any sufferings that God should call him to; this indeed will acquit the justice of God in giving him up to death. But whence is it that sinners should come to be so interested in these things, as thereon to be acquitted from sin, and brought into glory? In these verses the apostle enters upon a satisfactory answer to these important inquiries: the words contain,

I. A farther description of the captain of salvation and the sons to be brought to glory by him, taken from his office and work towards them, and the effect of it; "He that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified."

II. An assertion concerning them; they are "all of one."

III. A natural consequence of that assertion, which includes also the design and scope of it, "he is not ashamed to call them brethren."

IV. The confirmation thereof by a triple testimony from the Old Testament, "Saying I will declare," &c.

§2. (I.) He describes the captain of salvation, and the sons to be brought to glory, by their mutual relation to one another in sanctification. He is (*ὁ αγιαζων*) "he that sanctifieth," and they are (*οἱ αγιαζομενοι*)

“they that are sanctified.” As Christ sanctifies, so are the children sanctified. And the act of Christ which is here intended, is that which he did for the sons when he suffered for them according to Divine appointment; as verse 10. Now, as was said before, to “sanctify,” is either to separate for sacred use, or morally to purify, which latter sense is here principally intended.

§3. (II.) Having given this description of the captain of salvation, and of the sons to be brought to glory, the apostle here affirms of them that they are (εξ ενος) “of one,” which made it meet for him to suffer, and for them to be made partakers of his sufferings. The apostle here treats not of the spiritual oneness which is the result of spiritual life, but of their being so of one, that he might be meet to suffer for them, which is antecedent to their being sanctified, as the cause is to the effect. It is then one common nature that is here intended; he and they are of the same nature, of one mass, of one blood. And hereby he became meet to suffer for them, and they capable to enjoy the benefit of his sufferings. The Lord Jesus Christ being taken as the first fruits of the nature of the children, and as such offered to God, the whole lump, or the whole nature of man in the children, that is, all the elect, is separated to God, and effectually sanctified in their season. Being thus of one nature with them, he is not ashamed to call them brethren; and yet being the principle, head, and first fruits of our nature, and therein the author and finisher of our salvation, he is a father to us, and we are his children. “Behold I and the children which God hath given me.”

But if any one desire to extend this *oneness* (εξ ενος) farther, and to comprise in it the manifold relation sub-

sisting between Christ and his members, I shall not contend. There may be in it: Their being of one God, designing him and them to be one mystical body, one church, he the head, they the members. Their being of one covenant, made originally with him, and exemplified in them. Their being of one common principle of human nature. Their being of one Divine principle, or designed for a manifold spiritual union in respect of that new nature which the children receive from him, with every other thing that concurs to promote that union and relation; but that which we have insisted on is principally intended. Hence follows,

§4. (III.) A natural consequence of the oneness before asserted, "for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren." *For which cause;* that is, because they are "of one," partakers of one common nature, he calls them brethren. This affords a sufficient and proper ground for that appellation. Now his calling them "brethren," both declares that they are so, and also that he owns them as such. But whereas it may be said, that although they are thus "of one," in respect of their common nature, yet upon sundry other accounts he is so glorious, and they are so vile and miserable, that he may justly disavow the relation, and respect them as strangers. No, saith the apostle, "he is not ashamed to call them brethren," what deep condescension and fervent love!

§5. (IV.) What remains of these verses consisteth in the testimonies which the apostle produceth out of the Old Testament, Psalm xxii, 22, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the congregation will I sing praise unto thee." This testimony was brought to confirm what was said immediately before, that Christ owns them for his brethren. The

“name” of God is variously used: sometimes it denotes the being of God, God himself; sometimes his attributes, his excellencies, some one or more of the Divine perfections. As it is proposed to sinners for the object of their faith, trust, and love, as here, it denotes in an especial manner his love, grace, and goodness. And this is the name of God which the Lord Jesus manifested to the men given him out of the world, John xvii, 5; which is the same with his declaring the Father whom no man hath seen at any time, John i, 18. Hereof he says in the Psalm xxii, 22, (אֲסַפְּרָה) “I will declare it,” recount it in order, number the particulars that belong to it, and so distinctly and evidently make it known, (Ἀπαγγεῖλω) “I will make it known as a messenger” sent from thee. And this he doth by his own person and by his Spirit.

He “will sing praises to God in the midst of the congregation.” Both expressions allude to the declaration of God’s name, and praising him in the temple. The singing of hymns of praise to God in the great congregation was then a principal part of his worship. This is only explanatory of what went before. He would praise God by declaring his name. There is no way by which the praise of God may be celebrated, like that of declaring his grace, goodness, and love to men, whereby they may be won to believe and trust in him; whence glory redounds to him. The Lord Christ in his own person, by his Spirit, in his apostles and his word, by all his faithful messengers to the end of the world, setting forth the love, grace, and goodness of God in him the mediator, sets forth the praise of God “in the midst of the congregation.”

§6. His next testimony is taken from Psalm xviii, 2, “I will put my trust in him.” The whole psalm literally respects David, with his straights and deliverances;

not absolutely, but as he was a type of Christ. That which the apostle intends to prove by this testimony, is, that he was really and truly *of one* with the sons to be brought to glory. Had he been only God, this could not have been spoken of him. "He put his trust in God;" which evinceth him to have been truly and really of one with the children, his brethren; seeing it was his duty no less than it is theirs, to depend on God in troubles and distresses.

§7. The remaining testimony is, "Behold I and the children which God hath given me," and is taken from Isaiah viii, 18. That which the apostle aims at in the citation of this testimony, is farther to confirm the union in nature, and the consequent relation between Christ and his redeemed ones. God gives all the sons that are to be brought to glory to Jesus Christ; "Thine they were," saith he, "and thou gavest them me," John viii, 6. God having separated them as his peculiar portion in the eternal counsel of his will, gives them to the Son to take care of them, that they may be preserved and brought to the glory designed for them. He gives them to him as his children to be provided for; and to have an inheritance purchased for them, that they may become heirs of God and co-heirs with himself. Christ is satisfied with, and rejoiceth in the portion given him of his Father, as his children, his redeemed ones. Such was his love, such was his grace! for we in ourselves are "a people not to be desired." Jesus assumes the children given him of his Father into the same condition with himself, both as to life and eternity. "I and the children;" as he is, so are they; his lot is their lot; his God is their God; his Father is their Father; and his glory shall be theirs.



§8. *Obs.* 1. That all the children which are to be brought to glory, before their relation to Christ, are polluted and defiled, separate from God. They are all to be sanctified by him, both as to their real purification, and their consecration to be God's hallowed portion. We are naturally very proud, apt to please ourselves with our fancied excellencies, to think of nothing less than of being polluted or defiled, or at least not so far but that we can wash ourselves. What a hard thing it is to persuade the great men of the world, in the midst of their ornaments, paintings, and perfumes, that they are all over vile, leprous, loathsome, and defiled! Are they not ready to wash themselves in the blood of them who intimate any such thing to them? But whether men will hear or forbear, this is their real condition universally.

§9. *Obs.* 2. The captain of our salvation sanctifies every son whom he brings to glory. He will never glorify an unsanctified person; this is necessary on the part of God. If then he bring the children to God, he must make them holy, or they can have no admittance into his presence, no acceptance with him; for no unclean thing, nothing that defileth can enter into the new Jerusalem, the place where his holiness dwelleth. It is utterly impossible that any soul not washed with the blood of Christ, not sanctified by his spirit and grace, should stand in the sight of God. The infinitely pure Jehovah will not divest himself of his holiness, that he may receive, or be enjoyed by unholy creatures. This sanctification is necessary also on the part of Christ. A living head and dead members; a beautiful head and rotten members, how uncomely would it be! Such a monstrous body Christ will never own. He loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify it and cleanse it with the washing of

water by the word, and that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having a spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy without a blemish. This it became him to do, this was the end why he did it; he sanctifieth his church that he may present it a meet bride or spouse unto himself. The same is necessary on the children's part; as without it they are not meet for their duty, so they are not capable of their reward. Yea, heaven itself, in the true notion of it, is undesirable to any unsanctified person. Such a one, neither can, nor would enjoy God if he might. In a word, there is no one thing required of the sons of God, that an unsanctified person can do, nor one thing promised them that he can enjoy.

There is surely then a woful mistake in the world. If Christ sanctifies all whom he saves, many will appear to have been mistaken in their expectations another day. Let none deceive themselves, sanctification is a qualification indispensably necessary to them who will be under the safe conduct of Christ for salvation, for he leads none to heaven but whom he sanctifies on earth.

§10. *Obs.* 3. That notwithstanding the union of nature which is between the Son of God incarnate, the sanctifier, and the children that are to be sanctified, there is, in respect of their persons, an inconceivable distance between them, so that it is a marvellous condescension in him to call them brethren. He is not ashamed to call them so, though considering what himself is, and what they are, it should seem that he might justly be so. His nature was free from sin. Human nature defiled with sin, and the same nature as pure and strictly holy, are farther removed in real worth and excellency, than the meanest worm is

from the most glorious angel. Yet they did not hinder him, who was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, to own us as "his brethren." He says not with those proud hypocrites in the prophet, "stand farther off, I am holier than you;" but he comes to us and takes us by the hand in his love, to deliver us from this condition. Besides, we were obnoxious to all miseries here and hereafter. We see how unapt those that are rich and prosperous in this world are to take notice of their nearest relations in poverty and distress; and who among them would do so, if thereby they must be reduced to the state of those who are already miserable? Yet so it was with the Redeemer; his calling us, and owning us for his brethren, made him instantly obnoxious to all the miseries due to ourselves. And this also renders his condescension marvellous. Again, he is inconceivably above us in dignity: we are poor objects who have neither bread to eat, nor good right to partake of what we may meet with. And if Mephibosheth thought it a great condescension in David on his throne to take notice of him, being poor, who yet was the son of Jonathan, what is it in this King of kings to own us for brethren in our vile and low condition? He is infinitely distant from us, in his person, being, in respect of his Divine nature, God over all, blessed for ever. He did not so become man, as to cease to be God: though he drew a veil over his infinite glory, yet he did not part with it. But that he who in himself is thus over all, eternally blessed, holy, and powerful, should take us, poor worms of the earth, into this relation with himself, and avow us for "his brethren;" as it is not easy to be believed, so it is for ever to be admired. And if he will do this because he is of one with us, because a foundation of brotherhood is laid in his participation of our nature, how

much more will he continue the fraternal kindness, when he hath perfected this relation by the communication of his holy Spirit. He is a brother, born for a day of trouble, a redeemer for the friendless and fatherless. Let their miseries be what they will, he will be ashamed of none, but of them who are ashamed of him and his ways. The world rejects them, it may be their own relations despise them, they are persecuted, hated, reproached; but the Lord Jesus Christ is not ashamed of them: he will naturally care for them as their brother. Who then would be ashamed of him or his gospel?

§11. *Obs.* 4. That which was principally in the heart of Christ upon his sufferings, was to declare and manifest the love, grace, and good will of God unto men, that they might come to be acquainted with him and accepted before him. As he “lands upon the shore” from that tempest wherein he was tossed in his passion, he cries out, “I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the congregation will I sing praise unto thee.” And thus we find, that upon his resurrection he did not immediately ascend into glory, but first “declared the name of God” to his apostles and disciples; and then gave them orders that it should be declared and published to all the world. This was upon his compassionate heart, and he entered not into his glorious rest until he had performed it. For herein consisted the manifestation and exaltation of Jehovah’s glory; nor could the sons be brought to glory of themselves, nor have known any thing of that name of God, which is their life and salvation. Some men talk of I know not what declaration of God’s name, nature, and glory, by the works of creation and providence; but if the Lord Messiah had not “declared,” and preached these things,

these very disputers themselves would not have been in any other condition than all others of mankind are, who are left to the mere information of those boasted teachers, which is a condition most dark and miserable. Besides, on this "declaration" depended his own glory. The gospel is the rod of his strength, whereby his people are made willing in the day of his power. In brief, the gathering of his church, the setting up of his kingdom, the establishment of his throne, the setting of the crown upon his head, depend wholly upon his declaring the name of God in a preached gospel. Seeing, therefore, that the glory of God which he aimed at, the salvation of the sons which he sought for, and the honor of his kingdom which was promised him, all depend upon this work, it is no wonder if his heart were full of it, and that he rejoiced to be engaged in it.

§12. And this frame of heart ought to be in them, who under him are called to this work. The work itself we see is noble and excellent; such as the Lord of heaven carried in his eye through all his sufferings. And by his "rejoicing" to be engaged in it, he hath set a pattern for them whom he calls to the same employment. Where men undertake it for filthy lucre, for selfish ends, and from carnal respects, this is not to follow the example of Christ, but to serve their own bellies and hateful lusts. Zeal for the glory of God, compassion for the souls of men, love to the honor and exaltation of Christ, ought to be the sincere and steady principles of men in this undertaking. All praying, all preaching, all administration of ordinances, all our faith, all our obedience, if performed in a due and acceptable manner, are nothing but giving glory to God for his love and grace in Christ Jesus. And this is what ought to be our design in all Divine worship, es-

pecially what we perform “in the congregation,” to “set forth his praise,” to “declare his name,” and thus to give him glory.

VERSES 14, 15.

*Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also himself likewise took part of the same; That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage.*

§1. Connexion of the words and statement of the subject. §2. (I.) The state and condition of the children. §3. (II.) A double inference from that supposition. §4. (III.) The means of deliverance. §5. (IV) The effects of Christ's death. §6. Observations, 1. All sinners, subject to death as penal. §7. 2. Fear of death inseparable from sin. §8. 3. Fear of death subjects to bondage. §9. 4. Christ submitted to every thing but sin for the children's sake. §10. 5. It was only in the essence of the human nature that Christ was like us. §11. 6. Christ's principal end in assuming human nature was to suffer and die in it. §12. 7. The power of Satan founded in sin. §13. 8. The death of Christ victorious.

§1. **T**HE union of Christ with the children in their relation to one common root, and participation of the same nature, being asserted, the apostle proceeds to declare the ends and necessity of that union, in respect of the work for which God had designed him, and what he had to accomplish thereby; namely, the “destruction of the devil,” and thereby the “delivery of them that were in bondage by reason of death;” neither of which could have been effected, but by the death of the captain of salvation. We have in the words,

I. The state and condition of the children to be brought to glory supposed, partakers of flesh and blood, obnoxious to death, in great bondage through fear of it, in which they continued all their lives.

II. A double inference with respect to that supposition, Christ took part of the same, and delivered them.

III. The means whereby he did this, by his death.

IV. The immediate effect of his death, the destruction of the devil. From all which we shall,

V. Draw some profitable observations.

§2. (I.) The apostle expresseth by way of supposition, the state of the children whom God designed to bring to glory. And, they were in common “partakers of flesh and blood:” “flesh and blood” are by an usual synecdoche put for the whole human nature as subject to infirmities and death. But farther; it is implied that,

They were, as guilty, obnoxious to death as it was penal, being due to sin according to the curse of the law. On this supposition lies the whole weight of the mediation of Christ.

They were in great “bondage through fear of death.” Fear is a perturbation of mind, arising from the apprehension of a future imminent evil. And the greater this evil is, the greater will be the perturbation of mind; provided the apprehensions of it be answerable. The “fear of death” then here intended is, that trouble of mind men have in the expectation of death to be inflicted upon them, as a punishment due to their sins. And this apprehension is common to all men, arising from a general presumption that death is penal, and that it is the judgment of God, that they who commit sin are “worthy of death.” But it is more abundantly cleared and confirmed by the law, whose known sentence it is, “the soul that sinneth, it shall die.” And the troublesome expectation of this apprehended event is the fear of death here intended, being obnoxious to the sentence of death, they could not but live in fear of the execution of it. Hence, the troublesome expectation of death, as penal, brings them into bondage; and this, being involuntary, generates a strong desire of liberty, and puts men on all manner of attempts to secure it. It perplexes the mind, and forebodes future and greater evils. This is the common condition of

sinner out of Christ, whereof there are various degrees answerable to their convictions. For the apostle treats not here of men being servants to sin, which is voluntary; but of their sense of the guilt of sin, which is wrought in them even whether they will or no; and the yoke of which they would by any means cast off, though by none are they able to do it; for,

They are said to continue in this state "all their lives." Not that they were always perplexed with a sense of this bondage, but that they could never be utterly freed from it. For the apostle doth not say, that they were thus in bondage all their days, but that they were obnoxious and subject to it. They had no way to free or deliver themselves from it, but that at any time they might righteously be brought under its power; and the more they cast off the thoughts of it, the more they increased their danger. This was the state of the children, whose deliverance was undertaken by the captain of their salvation.

§3. (II.) We have a double inference with respect to that supposition, "He also himself likewise partook of the "same," and "delivered them." The word (*παράπλησιως*) *likewise, in like manner*, denotes a similitude that is consistent with a specific identity. And therefore Chrysostom from hence urges the Marcionites and Valentinians, who denied the reality of the human nature of Christ, seeing that he partook of it in like manner with us, that is, truly and really. But the word by force of its composition doth intimate some disparity and difference. He took part of human nature really as we do, and almost in the like manner with us. I say almost, for there were two differences between his manner of being partaker of human nature and ours. First, in that we subsist singly in that nature; but he took his portion in this nature into sub



sistance with himself in the person of the Son of God. Secondly, this nature in us is attended with many infirmities, that follow the individual persons who are partakers of it; in him it was free from them all. And this the apostle also intimates in the word (*μελεσχε*) *partook*, changing his expression from (*κεκοινωνηκε*) that whereby he declared the common interest of the children in the same nature, which is every way equal and alike. The whole is, that he took to himself his own portion in his own manner. But he not only took the children's nature, he also "delivered them" from the evils they had incurred. See below §5. And,

§4. (III.) His death was the means of delivering them from death; "That through death he might deliver them." There doth not any thing in the text appear to intimate, that the captain of salvation by death of one kind, should deliver the children from that of another. Neither will the apostle's discourse well bear such a supposition. For if he might have freed the children by any way and means, but only by undergoing that which was due from them for sin, whence could arise that indispensable necessity which he pleads for, by so many considerations, of his being "made like unto them?" Seeing he might without a participation of their nature, which the apostle urgeth, have done any other thing for their good and benefit except suffering what was due to them? And if it be said, that without this participation of their nature he could not die, which it was necessary he should do; I desire to know *why* it was necessary? If the death which he was to undergo, was not that death to which they for whom he died were obnoxious, how could it be any ways more beneficial to them, than what he might have done for them, although he had not died? The death of Christ is here placed in the midst, as the end

of one thing, and the means or cause of another; the end of his own *incarnation*, and the means of the children's deliverance.

§5. (IV.) There yet remains in the verses the effects of the death of Christ; "that he might destroy him who had the power of death, and deliver," &c. wherein we must briefly consider, who it is that had the power of death, wherein that power of his consisted, how he was destroyed, how by the death of Christ, and what was the happy deliverance for the children of God.

1. He that "had the power of death" is (*ὁ διαβολος*) *the devil*; the great enemy of our salvation; the great calumniator and false accuser; the firebrand of the creation; the head and captain of all apostasy from God, and of all desertion from his righteous law: the old serpent, who first falsely accused God to man, and continues to accuse men falsely to God.

2. His "power over *death*" is variously apprehended. All however consent, that the devil had no absolute or sovereign power over death; nor any (*εξουσια*) or *authority* about it, *de jure*, in his own right, or on grant, so as to act lawfully about it, according to his own will; nor any judging or determining power, as to the guilt of death, which is peculiar to God, the supreme rector and judge of all, Gen. ii, 17; Deut. xxxii, 39; Rev. i, 18. But wherein this power of Satan doth positively consist, they are not agreed. Some place it in his *temptations* to sin, which bind to death; some in the execution of the sentence of death. There cannot well, however, be any doubt, but that the whole interest of Satan, in reference to death, is intended in this expression. He was the means of bringing it into the world; then sin and death being thus entered, and all mankind being guilty of the one, and obnoxious to

the other, Satan became thereby to be their prince, as being the prince and author of that state and condition whereunto they are brought; he is therefore called "the prince of this world," John xii, 32. Now God having passed the sentence of death against sin, it was in the power of Satan to terrify and affright the consciences of men with the expectation and dread of it; so bringing them into bondage. And many God gives up to him to be agitated and terrified, as it were, at his pleasure. And to this we may add, that God hath ordained him to be the executioner of the sentence of death upon stubborn sinners to all eternity; partly for the aggravation of their punishment, when they shall always see, and without relief bewail their folly in hearkening to his allurements; and partly to punish himself in his woful employment. And for these several reasons is Satan said to have "the power of death." Let us next inquire,

3. How he was destroyed. "That by death (*καταργησῆναι*) "he might destroy him," &c. This word is almost peculiar to Paul; and what he usually intends by it, is, to make a thing or person to *cease as to its present condition*, or to be void as to its former power and efficacy; but implies not to remove, to annihilate, or to destroy the essence or being of it. Hence it is not here applied to the nature or being of the devil, but to his power over death; as it is elsewhere declared, John xii, 32, "Now is the judgment of this world, now is the prince of this world cast out." That which is here called the "destroying the devil," is there called the "casting out the prince of this world." It is the casting him out of his power from his principedom and rule, Col. ii, 15. Having spoiled principalities and powers he made an open shew of them, triumphing over them in his cross; as conquerors used to do.

When they slew not the persons of their enemies, they deprived them of their rule, and led them captives. In short, the destruction here intended of him that had the power of death, is the dissolution, evacuation, and removing that power which he had in and over death, with all the effects and consequences of it.

4. This destruction of Satan was effected by the death of Christ; which of all others seemed the most unlikely way, but, indeed, was not only the best, but the only way whereby it could be accomplished. The power of Satan, before mentioned, was all founded in sin, or the sinner's obligation and obnoxiousness to death, was that which gave him all his power. The taking away then of that obligation must needs be the dissolution of his power. The foundation being removed, all that is built upon it must needs fall to the ground. Now this, in reference to the children for whom he died, was done in the death of the Messiah; virtually, in his death itself; actually, in its application to them. When the sinner ceaseth to be obnoxious to death, the power of Satan ceaseth also. And this is the happy case of every one who hath an interest in the death of Christ: for "there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus," Rom. viii, 1. And this because he died for their sins, and took that death upon himself which was due to them; which being thereby conquered, and their obligation thereunto ceasing, the power of Satan is dissolved with it.

5. And hence it lastly appears, what was the delivery procured for the children by this dissolution of Satan's power. It respects both what they feared, and what ensued on their fear; that is, death and bondage. They were obnoxious to death on the guilt of sin as penal, as under the curse, as attended with hell or everlasting misery. This he delivers the children from, by

making an atonement for their sins by his death, virtually losing their obligation to it, and procuring for them eternal redemption. Herein also they are delivered from the bondage before described. The fear of death being taken away, the bondage that ensues thereon vanished.

§6. *Obs.* 1. All sinners are subject to death as it is penal. The first sentence reached them all, Gen. ii, 17. And thence they are said to be children of wrath, Ephes. ii, 3; obnoxious to death, to be inflicted in a way of wrath and revenge for sin; this passed upon all, inasmuch as all have sinned, Rom. v, 12. This all men see and know; but all do not sufficiently consider what is contained in the sentence of death, and very few seriously inquire how it may be avoided. Most men look on death as the common lot and condition of mankind, as though it belonged to the natural condition of the children, and not the moral; and were a consequent of their being, and not the demerit of their sin. They consider not, that although the principles of our nature are in themselves subject to dissolution, yet if we had kept the law of our creation it had been prevented by the power of God, engaged to continue life during our obedience, life and obedience are to be commensurate, until temporal obedience ended in life eternal. Death is penal, and its being common to all, hinders not but that it is the punishment of every one. All mankind is condemned as soon as born; life is a reprieve, a suspension of execution, and if during that time a pardon be not effectually sued out, the sentence will be executed according to the severity of justice. Under this law men are now born, this yoke have they pulled on themselves by their apostasy from God: neither is to any purpose to repine against it, or to conflict with it; there is but one way of deliverance,

§7. *Obs. 2.* Fear of death, as it is penal, is inseparable from sin before the sinner be delivered by the death of Christ; they were "in fear of death." There is a fear of death that is natural, and which is but nature's dislike of its own dissolution; and this hath various degrees, occasioned by the differences of men's natural constitutions, and other accidental occasions: so that some seem to fear death too much, while others fear it too little. But this difference is from occasions foreign and accidental; there is in all naturally the same horror of it, which is a guiltless infirmity like our weariness and sickness, inseparably annexed to the condition of mortality. But sinners in their natural state fear death as a punishment, an issue of the curse, as under the power of Satan, as a dreadful entrance into eternal ruin. There are indeed a thousand ways whereby this fear is for a season stifled in the minds of men; some live in brutish ignorance, never receiving any full conviction of sin, judgment, or eternity. Some put off the thoughts of their future state, resolving to shut their eyes and rush into it, when they can no longer avoid it. Fear presents itself as the forerunner of death, but they avoid the encounter, and leave themselves to its merciless power. Some please themselves with vain hopes of deliverance, though they know not how, nor why, they should be partakers of it. But let men forego these helpless shifts, and suffer their innate light to be excited with means of conviction, and they will quickly find what a judgment is formed in their souls concerning death. They will soon conclude, that "it is the judgment of God, that they who commit sin are worthy of death," Rom. i, 32; and then, that their own consciences accuse and condemn them, Rom. ii, 14, 15. Whence, unavoidably, fear and dreadful terror will seize upon them.

§8 *Obs.* 3. Fear of death, as penal, renders the minds of men obnoxious to bondage; which is a state of trouble that men dislike and cannot avoid. It is a penal disquietude arising from a sense of future misery: fain would men quit themselves of it, but are not able; there is “a chain of God” in it not to be broken; men may gall themselves with it, and if it be taken from them without a lawful release, it is to their farther misery. And this is in some measure or other the portion of every one that is convinced of sin, before they are freed by the gospel. Some have disputed what degrees of it are necessary before believing? In answer to which we may observe; that which is necessary for any one to attain to, is his duty; but this bondage can be the duty of no man, because it is involuntary. It will follow conviction of sin, but it is no man’s duty; rather, it is such an effect of the law, as every one is to free himself from as soon as possible in a right manner.

§9. *Obs.* 4. That the Lord Christ, out of his inexpressible love, willingly submitted to every condition of the children to be saved, and to every thing in every condition, sin only excepted. They being of flesh and blood which must be attended with many infirmities, and exposed to all sorts of temptations and miseries, he himself would also partake of the same. He rejoiced to do the will of God, in taking the body prepared for him, because “the children were partakers of flesh and blood.” Though he was in the form of God, yet that mind, that love, that affection towards us was in him, that to be like us, and thereby to save us, he emptied himself, took on him the form of a servant, our form, and became like unto us, Phil. ii, 5—8. He would be like us, that he might make us like himself; he would take our flesh, that he might give us of his spirit. He would join himself to us, that we might be joined to him, and become one spirit with him.

§10. *Obs.* 5. It was only in flesh and blood, the substance and essence of human nature, and not in our personal infirmities that the Lord Christ was made like unto us. He took to himself the nature of all men and not the person of any man. We have not only human nature in common, but we have, every one of us, particular infirmities and weaknesses, as existing in our sinful persons. Such are the sicknesses and pains of our bodies from inward distempers, and the disorders of the passions of our minds. Of these the Lord Christ did not partake; it was not needful, nay, it was not possible that he should do so; not needful, because he could provide for their cure without them; not possible, for they can have no place in a nature innocent and holy. And therefore he took our nature, not by an immediate *new creation* out of nothing, or of the dust of the earth like Adam; for if so, though he might have been like us, yet he would have been no kin to us, and so could not have been our God to whom the right of redemption belonged; nor by natural generation, which would have rendered our nature in him obnoxious to the sin and punishment of Adam, but by a miraculous conception of a virgin, whereby he had truly our nature, yet not subject, on its own account to any one of those evils, whereunto it is liable as propagated from Adam in an ordinary course. And thus, though he was joined to our nature, yet he was holy, harmless, and undefiled, in that nature, and separate from sinners, Heb. vii, 25. So that although our nature suffered more in his person, than it was capable in the person of any mere man, yet, not being debased by any sinful imperfection, it was always excellent, beautiful and glorious.

§11. *Obs.* 6. That the first and principal end of our Lord's assuming human nature was not to reign in it,



but to suffer and die in it. He was indeed from of old designed for a kingdom, but he was first to suffer, and so "to enter into his glory," Luke xxiv, 26. And he speaks of his coming into the world, to suffer, to die, to bear witness to the truth, as if that had been the only work that he was incarnate for. A kingdom was to follow, but suffering and dying was the principal work he came about. He had glory with his Father before the world was, John xvii, 5, and therein a joint rule with him over all the works of his hands. He need not have been made partaker of flesh and blood to have been a king, for he was the king immortal, invisible, the King of kings and Lord of lords, the only potentate from everlasting. But he could not have died if he had not been partaker of our nature. And therefore when the people would have taken him by force, and have made him king, he hid himself from them, John vi, 15. But he hid not himself when they came to take him by force, and put him to death; but affirmed, that "for that hour," or business, he came into the world, John xviii, 4, 5—11. And this farther sets forth his love and condescension; he saw the work that was proposed to him; how he was to be exposed to miseries, afflictions, and persecutions, and at length to make his soul an offering for sin; yet because it was all for the salvation of the children, he was contented with it, and even delighted in it. And how then ought we to be contented with any difficulties, sorrows, and afflictions which for his sake we may be exposed to, when he on purpose took our nature, that for our sakes he might be subject to incomparably more than we are called to?

§12. *Obs.* 7. All the power of Satan in the world over any of the sons of men, is founded in sin and the guilt of death attending it. Without sin he could

have no more to do on earth, than he hath in heaven, and according as sin abounds, or is subdued, so his power is enlarged or straitened. And hence all sinners out of Christ are under the power of Satan. They belong to that kingdom of death whereof he is the prince and ruler. The whole world lies (*εν τω πονηρω*) "in the power of this wicked one." If the guilt of death be not removed from any, the power of the devil extends to them. A power indeed restrained, both as to times and degrees, else he would continually devour; yet it is great and answerable to his titles, "the prince, the God of this world." And however men may flatter themselves, as the Jews did of old, that they are free, if they are not freed by an interest in the death of Christ, they are in bondage to this hateful tyrant; and as he works effectually in them here, he will with malicious rage inflict vengeance on them hereafter.

§13. *Obs. 8.* The death of Christ, through the wise and righteous disposal of God, is victorious, all-conquering, and prevalent. The aim of Satan was so also; who thereby supposed he should have secured his own kingdom. And what could worldly or satanical wisdom have imagined otherwise? He that is slain is conquered. His own followers were ready to think so; "we trusted, say they, that it had been he who should have redeemed Israel," Luke xxiv, 21, but he is dead; and their hopes are with him in the grave. What can be expected from him who was taken, slain, and crucified? Can he save others, who it seems, could not save himself? Is it not a foolish thing to look for life by the death of another? This was what the Pagans of old reproached the Christians with, that they believed in one who was crucified and put to death; and what could they expect from him? And our apostle

tells us, that this death, this cross, was a stumbling block unto the Jews, and folly to the Greeks, 1 Cor. i, 18, 23. And so it would have been in itself, Acts ii, 13; chap. iv, 28, had not the will, and wise counsel, and matchless grace of God been in it. But, through consummate wisdom, he ordered things so, that the death of Christ should pull out that pin, which kept together the whole fabric of sin and Satan; that, like Samson, he should in his death, glorious achievement! pull down the palace of Satan about his ears, and that in dying he should conquer and subdue all things to himself. All the angels of heaven stood looking on, to see what would be the end of this great trial. Men and devils were ignorant of the great work that God had in his hand; and whilst his enemies thought they were destroying Jesus, God was destroying them and their power. Whilst his heel was bruised, he brake their head. And this should teach us to leave all God's works to himself. He can bring light out of darkness, and meat out of the eater. He can disappoint his adversaries of their greatest hopes and fairest prospects, and raise up the hopes of his desponding children out of the grave. He can make suffering to be saving, death victorious, and heal us by the stripes of his Son. And should not this stir us up to meditate on this mysterious work of his love and wisdom? We can never search into it enough whilst our inquiry is guided by his word. New mysteries, all fountains of refreshment and joy, will continually open themselves to the inquiries of faith, until we come to be satisfied with its inexhaustible fulness to eternity.

## VERSE 16.

*For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham.*

§1. Connexion of the words. §2, 3. The principal terms explained. §4. Observations, 1. The Redeemer is God and man in one person. §5. 2. The redemption of mankind by the assumption of our nature, is of mere sovereign grace.

§1. **H**AVING asserted the incarnation of our Lord, and shewn its necessity from the ends which were to be accomplished by it; and therein given the reason why he was for a season made less than the angels; the apostle proceeds in this verse to confirm what he had taught before, and adds an especial amplification of the grace of God in this whole dispensation, from the consideration that the angels were not made partakers of similar love and mercy. ‘For, verily, not any where doth he take angels, but he takes the seed of Abraham.’

§2. (*Ου γαρ δαπτε*) “For, verily, not *any where*,” that is, what he denieth in the following words, is no where taught in the scripture. And thus also the affirmative clause of his proposition, “but he taketh the seed of Abraham,” is to be referred to the scripture. There it is promised, there it is spoken, and therein is it done by him. And our being thus referred to the scripture in proof of this point, gives full light into the meaning of the words. For how doth Christ in the scripture “take the seed of Abraham,” in such a sense as that therein nothing is spoken of him in reference to angels? Because he was of the posterity of Abraham, according to the flesh; he was promised to Abraham that he should be “of his seed,” yea, that he should be “his seed,” Gal. iii, 6; and this was the great principle, the great expectation of the Hebrews, that the Messiah should be “the seed of Abraham;” which

promise accordingly was accomplished. And he is here said to “take the seed of Abraham,” because in the scripture it is so plainly, so often affirmed he should do so; when not one word is any where spoken that he should be an angel, or take their nature upon him. And this, I say, gives us the true meaning of the words.

§3. (Ου—επιλαμβανειαι) “He took not on him;” that is, say some, by his participation of flesh and blood brought help and relief, not to angels, but to men, “the seed of Abraham.” And they suppose, to support this purpose, that the word here used (επιλαμβανειαι) is put for another, (αναλαμβανειαι) that signifies to *help*, to *succor*, to *relieve*, &c. The Socinians endeavor to confirm this exposition, for a manifest reason; for if the words express that the Lord Christ assumed human nature, which necessarily infers his pre-existence in another nature, their persuasion about the person of Christ is quite overthrown. It is acknowledged that the other word (αναλαμβανειαι) doth frequently signify, as here alleged, to *help* and *assist*, as it were, by putting forth the hand. But if that were intended by the apostle in this place, what reason can be assigned why he should wave the use of a word proper to his purpose, and frequently so applied by himself in other places, and make use of another, which, signifying no such thing, nor being any where used by him in that sense, must needs obscure his meaning, and render it unnecessarily ambiguous? Whereas, therefore, the last mentioned word (αναλαμβανειαι) signifies to *help* and *relieve*, and is constantly used by our apostle in that sense; but he employs another (επιλαμβανειαι) which signifies no such thing, nor is ever used by him to that purpose, the sense contended for, of *help and relief*, is plainly excluded. Therefore the word in question is

properly (*assumo, accipio*) to take unto, or to take upon; and the apostle teacheth us by it, that our Lord took unto him, or took on him, our nature of the seed of Abraham.

§4. *Obs.* 1. The Lord Jesus Christ is God and man in one person. For there is supposed in these words, (1.) His pre-existence in another nature, than that which he is said here to assume. He subsisted before, else he could not have taken on him what he had not before, Gal. iv, 4; John i, 14; 1 Tim. iii, 16; Phil. ii, 8, 9. That is, the Son, the word of God, eternally pre-existing, became incarnate. (2.) He took to himself, another nature, "of the seed of Abraham," according to the promise; so, continuing what he was, he became what he was not; for (3.) He took this to be his own nature; so took it, as to become truly "the seed of Abraham." And this could no otherwise be done, but (4.) By taking that nature into personal subsistence with himself, in the hypostatis of the Son of God; seeing the nature he assumed could no otherwise become his. For if he had by any ways or means taken the person of a man in the strictest union that two persons are capable of, in that case the nature had still been the nature of that other person and not his own. But he took it to be his own nature, which, therefore, must be by a personal union causing it to subsist in his own person: and, therefore, (5.) He is a true and perfect man; for no more is required to make a complete and perfect man, but the entire nature of man subsisting, which Christ hath; the human nature having a subsistence communicated to it by the Son of God. And, therefore, (6.) This is done without a multiplication of persons in him; for the human nature can have no personality of its own, because it was taken to be the nature of another person who was pre-

existent to it, and by assuming it, prevented its proper personality. Neither, (7.) Did hence any mixture or confusion of natures ensue, or of the essential properties of them; for he took the "seed of Abraham" to be his human nature, which, if mixed with the Divine, it could not be: and this he hath done, (8.) Inseparably and for ever.

§5. *Obs. 2.* The redemption of mankind by the taking of our nature was a work of mere sovereign grace. He took the seed of Abraham, not the nature of angels. And for what cause or reason? Can any be assigned but the sovereign grace, pleasure, and love of God? Nor doth the scripture assign any other. And this will the better appear if we consider,

That for a sinning nature to be saved, it was indispensably necessary that it should be assumed. The nature of angels being not taken, those that sinned in that nature must perish for ever; and they that fancy a possibility of saving sinners any other way but by satisfaction made in the nature that had sinned, seem not to have considered aright the nature of sin, and the justice of God. Had any other way been possible, why doth the perishing of angels so inevitably follow the non-assumption of their nature? This way alone then could it be wrought. Let us again consider,

That we were carrying away all human nature into endless destruction. For so it is intimated when Christ's assumption of it is expressed by (*επιλαμβανεται*) his "putting forth his hand and taking hold of it," to stop it in its course of apostasy and ruin. Of angels, only some individual persons fell from God; but our whole nature communicated from Adam was running headlong to destruction. In itself there could be no relief, nor any thing to commend it to God.

Here sovereign grace interposeth. "As to the angels, he spared them not," 2 Pet. ii, 4; and yet for us, "he spared not his own Son," Rom. viii, 32. And if we consider rightly what the scriptures inform us of, the number and dignity of the angels that sinned, and their primitive ability to accomplish the will of God; and compare therewith our own vileness and low condition, we may have matter of eternal admiration. And there was infinite wisdom as well as sovereign grace in this dispensation; sundry branches whereof the apostle afterwards exhibits.

VERSES 17, 18.

*Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted.*

§1. Connexion and dependance of the words. §2. The apostle's inference. §3—8. Explanation of the words. §9—14. Doctrinal, practical, and experimental observations.

§1. **H**AVING declared the general reasons why the Messiah was "for a little while," to be made "lower than the angels," in his incarnation and sufferings, the apostle proceeds to declare other special ends of this Divine dispensation, and therein makes way for the instructions about the priestly office of Christ, which was the principal foundation of the subsequent part of his inspired reasoning. In these two verses, he illustrates what he had taught before; and confirms what he had asserted concerning the Son's participation of "flesh and blood in like manner with the children," from the special end of his being an high priest. Now, they being persons obnoxious to temptations and sufferings of all sorts, he must in an especial manner



be able to "succor," to help, relieve, and save such persons.

§2. "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren." "To be made like unto his brethren in all things," is only a recapitulation of what the apostle had before taught concerning his incarnation and sufferings, in which he designs to shew the reason or end thereof; namely, that he might be "a merciful high priest." And thus did Chrysostom understand the connexion of these words: "therefore was he made man, that he might be a sacrifice able to purge our sins:" "Wherefore he ought." The necessity of the matter is expressed in the word (*ωφειλην*) *he ought*; it must be so; it could not be otherwise, on supposition that he was to be an high priest. God having designed him for that office, and its work, it was indispensably necessary for him to be made like unto his brethren in all things.

§3. "Like unto his brethren *in all things*:" that expression (*κατα παντα*) "in all things," is capable of sundry limitations; particularly, whereas the brethren are sinners, he was not made like them in sin. The *conformity*, therefore, consists in the following particulars:

1. He was made like to them in the *essence* of human nature, a rational soul, and a mortal body. But that he should take this nature upon him by natural generation, after the manner of the brethren, was not necessary; yea, so to have done, would not have furthered the end of his priesthood, but have enervated its efficacy, and have rendered him incapable of being a perfect priest. Again, it was not necessary that this human nature should have its individuation from itself, and a particular subsistence in itself; for this also would have overthrown his priesthood.

2. It was also necessary, that with his human nature he should take upon him all the *properties* and *affections* of it, so that he might be made like unto the brethren. His soul was not to be freed from the affections which are co-natural to a human soul, as love, joy, fear, sorrow, shame, and the like; nor was his body to be free from being subject to hunger, thirst, cold, pain, and death itself. But now, whereas these things in the brethren are attended with irregular perturbations for the most part, and whereas all the individuals of them have their proper infirmities in their own persons, partly by inordinate passions and inclinations from their tempers and complexions, partly in weaknesses and sicknesses, proceeding from either their original constitutions, or other following inordinacies, it was no way needful, that in any of these he should be like to the brethren; yea, a conformity to them therein would have absolutely impeded his undertaken work.

3. He was like unto us in *temptations*, for the reason given in the last verse; but herein also some difference may be observed between him and us. For most of our temptations arise from within us, from our own unbelief and lusts; and in those from without, there is somewhat in us to take part with them, which always makes us fail in our duty of resistance, and oftentimes leads us into farther miscarriages; but from these things he was absolutely free. For as he had no inward disposition or inclination to the least evil, being perfect in all graces, and in all their operations at all times; so when the prince of this world accosted him, he had no part in him, nothing to close with his suggestions, or to entertain his terrors.

4. His sufferings were of the *same kind* with those of the brethren; yet they had far different effects upon him, from what they would have had on them. For

whereas he was perfectly innocent and perfectly righteous, he was free from all impressions of those sinful consequents which attend the utmost sufferings under the curse of the law by sinners themselves. Now thus to be "made like unto them" it *became* him; it was meet, just, and *necessary*, that God should make him so, because of the office assigned him.

§4. The general end of his conformity to the brethren is, "that he might be a faithful and merciful high priest." He was made man, that he might be an high priest; he suffered being tempted, that he might be merciful and faithful. There was no more required than that he might be an high priest, but that he should partake of our nature; but that he might be merciful and faithful, with that kind of mercy and faithfulness which the brethren stood in need of, it was moreover required that he should suffer and be tempted. The qualifications for his office, which by sufferings and temptations he was furnished with, are two; mercifulness, and faithfulness.

*Mercifulness*; he was (*ελεημων*) *merciful*, tenderly compassionate, one that lays all the miseries of his people to heart, so caring for them as to relieve them. Mercy in God is but a simple apprehension of misery, made effective by an act of his holy will to relieve. Mercy in Christ is a compassion, a condolency, and hath a moving pity of sorrow joined with it. And this was in the human nature of Christ a grace of the Spirit in all perfection. But yet neither is this mercifulness in general what the apostle intends; but he considers it, as excited and drawn forth by his own temptations and sufferings. He suffered and was tempted, that he might be merciful; not absolutely, but a "merciful high priest." The relation of the sufferings and temptations of Christ is not to the habit

of his mercifulness, but to the special exercise of it as our high priest.

The other qualification mentioned, is, that he should be (*πιστος*) *faithful*; which consists in his exact, constant, careful consideration of all the concerns of his adopted brethren under their temptations and sufferings.

§5. (*Τα προς τον θεον*) “In things pertaining to God;” that is, either in things that were to be done for God with or towards men, as the apostle speaks: “We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us,” 2 Cor. v, 20, or things that were to be done with or towards God for men: for there were these two general parts of the high priest’s office; but the latter was the principal part, the other being only a consequent of it. And this the apostle manifests in the special limitation which he adjoins to this general assertion; he was an high priest in things appertaining to God (*εις το ιλασκεσθαι τας αμαρτιας τε λαου*) “to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.”

§6. The object of the priestly action here assigned to Christ, is (*ολαως*) *the people*; that is, say some, the seed of Abraham, whose interest in the mediation of Christ, as their high privilege, the apostle here reminds the Hebrews of; not that the elect among the Gentiles, say they, are excluded, but that he expressly mentions only the first fruits among the Jews. But the apostle’s intention is only to illustrate the effect of the priesthood of Christ from the office of the high priest under the Old Testament; for as he had a peculiar people for whom he made atonement, so also hath Christ, that is, all his elect.

The action ascribed to him is, “to make reconciliation for sins.” The Greek word (*ιλασμομαι*) is properly and usually in all writers, sacred and others, to *appease*,

to atone, to please, to propitiate, to reconcile. But how can any one be said to please, or atone, or reconcile sin? The difficulty pretended from the construction is not of any moment. The sense and constant use of the word being established, there must be an ellipsis supposed, and the apostle's phrase (*ιλασκεισθαι τας αμαρτιας*) is the same in sense with (*ιλασκεισθεον τον θεον περι των αμαρτιων*) "to make reconciliation with God for sins;" as the same phrase is in other places explained.

§7. "For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted." (*Εν ᾧ γαρ*) "For in that," that is, whereas, inasmuch, seeing that. Now it is here affirmed of Christ that (*πεπονηθε πειρας θεις*) "he suffered being tempted." It is not his sufferings absolutely considered, nor his being tempted, that is peculiarly designed, but "his suffering in his temptation." To know then what were those sufferings, we must inquire, what were his "temptations," and how he was affected with them. Temptations are things in themselves of an indifferent nature, having no moral evil in them absolutely considered; whatever attends them of that kind, proceeds either from the intention of the tempter, or the condition of them that are tempted. Hence God is said to "tempt" men, but not to induce them to sin; Gen. xxii, 1; James i, 13; and therefore whatever evil ensues, in this cause, is from the tempted themselves. Moreover, though temptation seems to be of an active import, yet in itself it is merely, for the most part, neutral. Hence it compriseth any thing, state, or condition, whereby a man may be tried, exercised, or tempted: and this will elucidate the various temptations under which the Lord Christ suffered. For although they were all external, yet they were not confined to the assaults of Satan, which are principally regarded under

that name; for he was tempted even from his very state and condition in this world: he was poor, despised, persecuted, reproached, especially from the beginning to the end of his public ministry. Herein lay one continued temptation or trial of his obedience, by all manner of hardships. Hence he calls this whole time the time of his temptations; "You have abode with me in my temptations," or in the work that he carried on, in a constant course of temptation, arising from his outward state and conditions: and thence innumerable particular temptations befell him, under all which he suffered. For instance, he had temptations from his relations in the flesh; from his followers, his chosen disciples not excepted, all of whom left him: one denied him, and another betrayed him; to which we may add, the anguish of his mother, when a sword pierced through her soul in his sufferings. He had temptations from his enemies of all sorts, from all which his sufferings were inexpressible: in these Satan had a principal hand, he set upon him in the entrance of his ministry immediately in his own person, and followed him in the whole course of it, by the instruments he set on work; and he had also a season, an hour of darkness allowed him, when he was to try his utmost strength and policy against him; under which assault he suffered, (as was foretold from the foundation of the world) the "bruising of his heel," or his temporal and corporal ruin. And, to crown all his trials and sufferings, the mysterious fact of God's desertion of him was the most perplexing.

§8. Hence, "he is able to succor them that are tempted;" wherein we have the description of them for whose sake Christ underwent this condition, the ability that accrued to him thereby for their relief,

and, the advantage they are thereby made partakers of. They, for whose sake he underwent this condition, are those whom he reconciled to God by his sacrifice as an high priest; and are here described as those who stand in continual need of aid and assistance, (οἱ πειραζόμενοι) "tempted ones." Notwithstanding their reconciliation to God by the death of Christ, they have a prescribed course of obedience in which they meet with many difficulties, dangers, and sorrows. They maintain a continual inward warfare against those temptations that spring from the remainder of their own corruptions, during the whole course of their lives. Moreover, besides this perpetual conflict, there are permitted, in the order of a holy and wise providence, certain seasons wherein temptations grow high, strong, impetuous, and are even ready to ruin them. As Christ had an "hour of darkness" for his encounter, so have they. As Satan, from what he doth, is called "the tempter;" so they, from what they endure, may be called "tempted ones." Their calling is to oppose temptations, and their whole lives are a conflict with them. The high priest having suffered the like things with them, they have an assured ground of consolation in all their temptations and sufferings, which he confirms by what is added of his ability to succor them.

(Δυναταί) "He is able." Now this ability is such as ariseth from that peculiar mercifulness, to which he is disposed from his experience of suffering under temptation: not a natural, but a moral power; not a power of the hand, but a compassion of the heart that moves and excites him to their relief and succor. This is the proper effect of mercy and compassion; it sets power on work for the relief of them with whose condition

it is affected: thus Dido, in her pathetic address to Æneas and his friends,

“*Haud ignara mali miseris succurrere disco.*”

“And touch’d with miseries myself have known,  
I view, with pity, woes so like my own.”

Lastly, The *advantage* of the brethren from hence lies in the “succor” that he is thus able to afford them; which consists in a speedy coming in with relief, strength, consolation, or deliverance; by his word, promises, or providence for them, who, being in distress, call for it.

§9. *Obs.* 1. The assumption of our nature, and his conformity to us therein, was principally necessary for the Lord Jesus, on account of his being an high priest for us. It “behoved” him to be made like unto us, “that he might be an high priest.” Such, without the assumption of our nature, he could not be, because without this he had nothing to offer; and of necessity, saith the apostle, he must have somewhat to offer. A priest without a sacrifice is a king without a subject. Had not God prepared him a body, he could have had nothing to offer. He was to have a self to offer to God, or his priesthood had been vain.

§10. *Obs.* 2. Such was the unspeakable love of Christ to the brethren, that he would refuse no condition needful for the discharge of the work he had undertaken for them. He knew what this would cost him, what trouble, sorrow, and suffering he must undergo; what miseries he must conflict with all his life; what a close was to be put to his pilgrimage on earth; what woful temptations he was to pass through; all lay naked and open before him. But such was his love, shadowed out by that of Jacob to Rachel, that he was content to submit to any terms, to undergo any



condition, so that he might save and enjoy his beloved church. See Ephes. v, 25, 26.

§11. *Obs.* 3. The principal work of Christ as our high priest, and from which all other actings of his in that office flow, was to make reconciliation or atonement for sin; which was necessary on the part of his elect, himself, and God.

It was necessary on the part of his elect, for whom he undertook that office. They were by nature enemies of God, and children of wrath; unless peace and reconciliation be made for them in the first place, they could neither have encouragement to go to him with their obedience, nor expect any mercy from him, or acceptance with him.

It was also necessary on his own part. Had not this been first accomplished, he could not have undertaken any other act of his priestly office for us. All his intercession for us, his watching for our good, as the merciful high priest over the house of God, is grounded upon the reconciliation and atonement which he made: his intercession, indeed, being nothing but the blessed representation of his atoning blood. Moreover,

It was equally necessary on the part of God also; for herein principally had he designed to manifest his righteousness, grace, love, and wisdom, wherein he will be glorified, Rom, iii, 25, "He set him forth to be a propitiation to declare his righteousness;" the righteousness of God was most eminently glorified in the reconciliation wrought by Christ, when he was made a propitiation for us, or made atonement for us in his blood. All after actings of God towards us, indeed, are full of love, but they are all streams from this fountain, or rivers from this ocean. And the apostle

sums up all the grace of the gospel in this, that "God was in Christ reconciling us to himself." And therefore,

§12. They who weaken, oppose, or take away this reconciliation, are enemies to the salvation of men, the honor of Christ, and glory of God; from men they take their hopes and happiness, from Christ his office and honor, from God his grace and glory. To such I would thus address myself: "And would you have us give you credit, contrary to the dictates of our consciences, the testimony of the word, and the voice of the whole creation, and that in a matter of such importance and everlasting concern? What if all these should prove true, and you should prove liars, should we not perish for ever by relying on your testimony? Is it reasonable we should attend to you in this matter? Go with your sophisms to men who were never burdened with a sense of weighty guilt, whose spirits never took in a sense of God's displeasure against it, who never were brought under bondage by the sentence of his law, who never were forced to cry out in the bitterness and anguish of their souls, what shall we do to be saved? Wherewith shall we come before the Lord, or appear before the high God? It may be *they* will be entangled and seduced by you; but for those who have thus in any measure known the terror of the Lord, they will be secured from you by his grace." Besides, what ground do such men leave the Intercessor to stand upon, as it were, while appearing for us in heaven! Do they not take that blood out of his hand, which he is carrying into the holy place? And how do they despoil him of his honor, in taking off from his work? A miserable employment! when men shall study and take pains to persuade themselves and others, that Christ hath not done that for them, which,

if he hath not done it, they must perish for evermore. From whom can such men look for their reward? Are men so resolved as not to be beholden to Jesus Christ, that rather than grant that he hath made reconciliation for us by his blood, they will deny that there was *any need* that any such reconciliation should be made. Oh the depths of Satan! Oh the stupidity and blindness of men that are taken alive by him, and led captive at his pleasure! Let inquiring and troubled souls know that, if any thing else gives them ease, it gives them poison; if it gives them peace, it gives them ruin. Reconciliation by the blood of Christ is the only relief for their souls; and nothing more discovers the vanity of any religion, however it may prevail in the world, than the regardlessness of its professors looking after this, which is the foundation stone of all durable building in the things of God. *This* they will do, and *that* they will do; but how they shall have an interest in the "reconciliation made for sin?" they trouble not themselves with it.

§13. *Obs.* 4. The Lord Christ suffered under all his temptations, but sinned in none. He *suffered* being tempted, but did not *sin* being tempted. He had the heart and affections of a man, and that in the highest degree of sense and tenderness; whatever sufferings the soul of a man may be brought under by grief, sorrow, shame, fear, pain, danger, and loss; by any afflictive passions within or impressions of force from without; he underwent, he felt them all. All the advantage that he had above us, by the excellency of his person, was only that the sorrows of his heart were enlarged thereby, and he was made capable of greater enduring, though without sin. And it was to be thus with him, because, although the participation of human nature was only necessary, that he might be "an high priest,"

yet his sufferings under temptation were so, that he might be “a merciful high priest for tempted sufferers.” Such have need not only to be saved by his atonement, but to be relieved, favored, and comforted by his grace. They did not only want one to undertake for them, but to undertake for them with care, pity, and tenderness. He bears still in his holy mind the sense he had of his sorrows wherewith he was pressed in the time of his temptations; and seeing his brethren conflicting with the like difficulties, he is ready to help them; and because his power is proportioned to his will, it is said he is “able.” And whatever may be the real effects on the mind of Christ from his temptations and sufferings, now he is in heaven; I am sure they ought to be great on our faith and consolation, when we consider him undergoing them for this very end and purpose.

§14. *Obs. 5.* Temptations cast souls into danger; but the great duty of “the tempted,” is to cry out to the Lord Redeemer for help and relief. To *succor* any one, is to come to his help upon his cry and call; and this being promised by Christ to those that are tempted, supposeth their earnest cry unto him. If we be slothful, if we be negligent under our temptations, if we look other ways for assistance, if we trust to, or rest in our own endeavors for a conquest over them, no wonder if we are wounded, or fall under them, prostrate and vanquished. This is the great *arcanum* for the cure of this disease, the only means for support, deliverance, and conquest; namely, that we earnestly and constantly apply ourselves to Christ for *succor* as our “merciful High Priest,” who has had experience of them. Were this more our practice than it is, we should find more freedom from them, or more success against them than usually we have. Never

any soul miscarried under temptation, that cried to the Lord for succor under a real apprehension of danger, with faith and expectation of relief. O what encouragement is here given us, by his matchless qualifications! he is faithful, he is merciful, and, as the effect of both, he is able, he is every way sufficient to relieve and succor poor tempted souls. He hath a sufficiency of care, of wisdom, and of faithfulness, to observe and know the seasons wherein succor is necessary. Lo! here, tempted soul, a sufficiency of tenderness, mercy, and compassion; a sufficiency of effectual power; a sufficiency of acceptance at the throne, to prevail for suitable supplies and succors. Yes, (let the afflicted church hear it and rejoice!) he is every way "able to succor them that are tempted;" to him be praise and glory for evermore.

### CHAPTER III.

#### VERSES 1, 2.

*Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house.*

§1. Connexion of the words. §2--7. (I.) The several parts of them explained. §8. (II.) Observations and improvements. 1. All gospel doctrines are to be practically improved. §9. 2. Gospel ministers should use holy prudence. §10. 3. Believers are strictly and equally related. §11. 4. True Christians are sanctified, §12. 5. The knowledge of Christ comes by an heavenly calling. §13. 6. Heavenly vocation is a great privilege. §14. 7. The mysteries of the gospel require attentive consideration. §15--17. 8. God's business with sinners could not be transacted but by the embassy of his Son. §18. 9. Special privileges will not profit without special grace. §19. 10. Christ is all in all to his church. §20--22. 11. A diligent consideration of Christ's frees from entanglements and error. §23. Uses.

§1. **T**HE general nature of this epistle, and the doctrines it contains, are constantly *improved* to enforce practical exhortations. Wherefore our apostle, having in the foregoing chapters manifested the excellency of Christ, its Divine author, both in his person and work,

here acquaints the Hebrews to what end he insisted on these things, that by the *consideration* of them they might be constant and persevering in the gospel faith and worship.

Let us improve this verse. which begins an application of the doctrine before stated, by

I. Explaining the several parts of it. And

II. Making some observations upon them.

§2. (I.) "Wherefore, holy brethren." The first word (*οθεν*) *wherefore*, respects that which went before. Wherefore, or *seeing*, that he of whom I speak is so excellent, and so highly exalted above all; and that his being humbled for a season was for the benefit and unspeakable advantage of the church, it cannot but be your duty to consider both what he is in himself, and what he is to us. His grand design is to press upon them his general exhortation to constancy and perseverance in their profession of the gospel; and an intermediate duty subservient to this design is, their diligent consideration of Jesus Christ.

This term of relation, (*αδελφοι*) "brethren," is variously used in scripture; for, beside the strict acceptance, it is taken more largely for near kinsmen, and even for all the branches of one common stock, though a whole nation; and sometimes it expresseth a joint profession of the same religion, on which account the Jews called themselves "brethren" all the world over, Acts xxviii, 21; as also a spiritual relation, having one Father, and being of one family, "All ye are brethren, and one is your Father which is in heaven," Matt. xxiii, 8, 9. I am apt to think, that in the use of this expression to the Jews, the apostle had respect to that brotherhood which they had among themselves in their ancient church state; but principally their new rela-

tion in Christ, which farther appears from the annexed compellation "Holy."

This word (*αγιοι*) "holy," is the usual epithet where-with our apostle honors and adorns believers. He accounted them "holy," as possessed of real sanctification, and as being called by an holy calling; whereby he manifested his high regard and tender affection for them. Besides, by this endearing treatment, he gives them the greatest evidence of his sincerity in dealing with them; for how could they fear that he would arbitrarily impose any thing on persons whom he honored as holy, and loved as brethren?

§3. He next describes them from their "calling;" "partakers (*Κλησεως επερωμις*) of the heavenly calling." And he calls the vocation "heavenly," from the fountain and principal cause of it, even "the Father who is in heaven;" for as our election, so our calling is in an especial manner ascribed to him; for no man can come to the Son, unless the Father draw him. Again, it is so called in respect of the means whereby this calling is wrought, the word and spirit, which are both "from above;" as also the end, which is to heaven and heavenly things, wherein lies the hope of our calling.

The apostle moreover, assigns to these Hebrews a participation; (*μελοχοι*) "partakers of the heavenly calling." And this he doth, that he might manifest wherein their great privilege consisted. They were apt to boast of the privileges they enjoyed in their Judaism, which indeed were great, but they are all of no esteem in comparison of what they had now obtained by the grace of Jesus Christ. On the other hand, he insinuates that they were not to make an enclosure of this privilege, like those wherewith they had been formerly entrusted, the Gentiles being now fellow-heirs with them in this heavenly calling. Hence he both

declares his own communion with them in that great privilege, and reminds them of their duty thence resulting. Being partakers of this calling and access to Christ, it must needs be their duty diligently to consider him.

§4. (*Καλινοησατε*) “Consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.” The words may be read either, Consider Christ Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our profession; and so the person of Christ is placed as the immediate object, and the other words are added only as a description of him by his offices: or, Consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; and then the apostle and high priest of our profession are the proper objects of consideration, and the name added doth but notify the individual person who was invested with those offices. The original word (*καλινοεω*) denotes “a diligent intention of mind,” or, “to set the mind diligently to mark and consider, so as to understand the thing considered.” Hereby he seems to intimate, that they had not sufficiently adverted to the nature and quality of the person and offices of Christ, and for that reason were kept in the entanglements of Judaism; therefore he exhorts them to fix their minds for a diligent, rational, spiritual consideration of the sublime subject.

Christ is here said to be (*τον αποστολον*) “the apostle of our profession.” An apostle is “one sent;” a legate, ambassador, or public messenger; and the Messiah is one sent of God, sent upon his all-important errand to the children of men. And because God had promised from the beginning thus to send him hence, “he whom God would send,” or (*ο ερχομενος*) “he that was to come,” became a periphrasis or principal notation of him. Two things are then included in this expression, or title: first, the authority he had for his work; he



came not of himself, but was sent of God the Father; and therefore spake in his name. Secondly, his work in itself, which was to reveal the will of the Father to men; to declare the Father himself, his name, and the mystery of his grace. It is therefore a title of honor as well as of office that is here given him.

Hereunto is added (*τον αρχιερα*) “the *high priest*.” Both offices meet in one; as the kingdom and priesthood are also promised, Zech. vi, 13. Both the Hebrews and we are now to look for all in him. These offices of old were in several persons; Moses was the apostle or ambassador of God to declare his will and law to the people, and Aaron was the high priest to minister in the worship of God. This was the poverty of types, that no one person could so much as represent the work between God and the church. To manifest, therefore, to the Hebrews how Christ hath the pre-eminence in all things, he instructs them, that both the offices, that of an apostle, which of old was executed by Moses, and that of the high priesthood committed unto Aaron, were vested in him alone; intending afterwards to evince how far he excelled them both, and how excellent were his offices in comparison of theirs, though they bore the same name.

The limitation adjoined is (*της ομολογιας ημων*) “of *our profession*.” The words may be taken either objectively and passively, the apostle and high priest whom we profess; or actively, denoting the author of our profession, the apostle and high priest who hath revealed and declared the faith which we profess, the religion which we own, and therein exerciseth in his own person the office of the priesthood. And Christ is the apostle of this profession, as he brought life and immortality to light by the gospel, teaching and instructing us in the whole will of God, as Moses did

the Jews. He is also the high priest of our profession, inasmuch as he himself offered the one and the only sacrifice, which in our religion we own and profess; and continues alone to perform the whole office of a priest therein, as Aaron and his successors did in that of the Jews. It belonged not to the office of the high priest to institute and appoint any thing in the worship of God, but only to execute his own duty, in offering sacrifices, and interceding for the people. So the Lord Jesus Christ, who, as the apostle of our profession, instituted the whole worship of God as our high priest, only offers the sacrifice of the church, and intercedes for the people.

§5. "Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house." The sacred penman entering upon a comparison between Moses and Christ, as he was the apostle of God, or one sent by him to reveal his will; he recommends him to the faith of the Hebrews under the principal qualification of a person in that office: "he was faithful;" and this being a term of relation, he farther describes it by its respect to that act of God whereunto it answered; "to him that appointed him:" and then in general he expresseth the comparison intended by naming the person with whom he is compared, "even as Moses;" and the subject of his employment, the "whole house of God."

§6. The chief qualification of an apostle, or an ambassador, is, that he be "faithful." God's apostle is the chief steward, or dispenser of his mysteries: and it is principally required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. Now the fidelity of a legate, ambassador, or apostle, consists principally in the full declaration of the mind and will of him who sent him, as to those ends for which he is sent. Faithfulness respects *trust*.

Our Lord, therefore, must have had a trust committed to him wherein he was faithful. Accordingly he sought not his own glory, but the glory of him that sent him; declaring, that he came not in his own, but in his Father's name, John v, 43. He moreover sealed that truth with his blood, which he came into the world to bear witness to, John xviii, 37. And greater faithfulness could not be expressed.

“To him that appointed him.” This appointment of Christ, or his being made the apostle of God, consists in the eternal designation of him to his work and office; in the solemn promise made from the beginning to send him for this purpose; in sending him actually into the world to be the light of men, John i, 4; and to manifest that eternal life which was with the Father, 1 John i, 2; and, by a visible sign, in the descent of the Holy Ghost upon him. To these acts of appointment, God added his command, and published it from heaven to all, that they hear and obey him, Matt. xvii, 5.

§7. “As also Moses was faithful.” These words express the farther fidelity of Christ in comparison with Moses. The apostle seems directly to express the words used by God himself concerning Moses, Numb. xii, 7, “He is faithful in all my house.” It is true he failed personally in his faith, and was charged of God that he believed him not, Numb. xx, 12; but this was no impeachment of his faithfulness in the special office intended. As he was to reveal Jehovah's mind, and institute his worship, he was universally faithful by an infallible testimony, Exod. xl, 16, “according to all that God appointed him, so did he.”

The extent of his faithfulness (*εν ὅλῳ τῷ οἴκῳ*) to “the whole house of God;” that is, saith Chrysostom, (*εν ὅλῳ τῷ λαῷ*) “in the whole people;” his household,

his family, his church, by way of appropriation; his lot, his portion, as a man's house is to him, Deut. xxxii, 9, "The Lord's portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance." He dwells in his church by his special and glorious presence, as a man in his own house, Rev. xxi, 3, which denotes care, love, and delight. In this house was Moses faithful; he was the visible mediator between Jehovah and the Hebrew tribes when their church state was erected, and they brought into the enjoyment of those privileges, whereby they were exalted above all the nations of the globe. It is worthy of notice, that the apostle deals not with them in this matter directly, until he had made such a declaration of the person of Christ, and proved him to be so incomparably exalted above angels, that they could not be justly prejudiced, if he preferred him before Moses also; which was indispensably necessary to his design. He produceth the highest and most honorable testimony that is given Moses in the whole scripture; whereby he at once grants all that they had to plead concerning him in this matter, and removes all suspicions of his derogating any thing from his real excellence. Moreover, he discovers a consistency between the true honor of Moses and the exaltation of Christ, which as yet many of them did not understand; but thought, that if Christ were exalted and the gospel established, Moses must be cast off and condemned. In this comparison he reminds them, that the Lord Jesus Christ was the great promised prophet of the church, to whom they were to attend on pain of being disowned of God.

How suitable this procedure was to the removal of their prejudices, is to inform their minds, and to endear their affections; and, consequently, what wisdom

was used in it, needs no proof. We now proceed, as proposed,

§8. (II.) To make some observations on the words thus explained.

*Obs.* 1. All the doctrines of the gospel, especially those concerning the person and offices of Christ, are to be practically improved, for the important ends of their revelation,—faith and obedience. We are so to know Christ, as to live in the strength of his grace, to the praise of his glory. “If ye know these things,” saith the Redeemer, “happy are ye if ye do them.” It is our privilege, our great privilege, to *know* them, but it is our blessedness to *do* them. When men content themselves with the notion of spiritual things, without endeavoring to express their efficacy, in the practical conformity of their minds and souls to them, it proves their ruin. That word which is *preached* to us, ought to *dwell* in us. It is a miserable profession, when some preach without application, and others hear without practice. To hear and to learn are good, not for their own sake, but for the sake of practice. The apostle tells us of some who are always learning, (perhaps make it their business, and scarce do any thing else) but are never able to come to the *knowledge of the truth*, 2 Tim. iii, 7; that is, to have an impression of its power and efficacy on their souls. Gospel truths are (*medicina animæ*) physic for a sin-sick soul; now what use is it to get store of medicines and cordials, and never to take them? No more is it to collect, with whatever diligence, sermons and doctrines, if we apply them not. Some contract, as it were, a dropsy in hearing; the more they hear the more they desire: but they are only pleased with it at present, and swelled for the future; are neither really refreshed nor strengthened. But every truth hath, as the Hebrews express

it, "meat in its mouth," something for our own nourishment. We should regard sermons, as Elijah did the ravens, that brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening, 1 Kings xvii, 6; they bring food with them for our souls, that we may feed on it. When the Israelites gathered manna to eat, it was bread from heaven, angels' meat, food excellent and precious; but when they laid it by, it became offensive and bred worms, Exod. xvi, 20. When God scatters truths amongst men, if they gather them to feed on, they are the bread of heaven, angels' food; but if they only hoard them up in their books, or notionally in their mind, they will breed the worms of pride and hypocrisy, and make them an offensive savor unto God. When, therefore, any truth is proposed to you, learn what is your great concern therein, and let it have its proper and perfect work upon your souls.

§9. *Obs. 2.* Dispensers of the gospel ought to use holy prudence in dealing with those whom they are to instruct. Next to our Lord himself, Paul is the most admirable example of holy wisdom, tenderness, compassion, and zeal, to all ministers of the gospel. This, the instructions given to his two beloved sons, Timothy and Titus, sufficiently testify. His care, pains, travail, and watchfulness; his patience, love, compassion, and zeal, who can declare, or worthily admire! By these means he removed, or at least rendered ineffectual, the great prejudice in favor of Judaism; kept up in his hearers a becoming caution against the insinuations of seducers and false apostles; raised their attentions, prepared them every way for instructions, and won them over to Christ. Blessed Jesus! what cause have we to mourn, when we consider the pride, covetousness, ambition, negligence, self-seeking, and contempt of thy

flock, which are found amongst many of them who take upon themselves to be dispensers of thy word, whereby the souls of men are filled with offences against thy holy ways!

§10. *Obs.* 3. Believers are all related to one another in the strictest bond of an equal relation. They are all brethren, holy brethren; and what the reproaching world calls them in scorn, the Holy Spirit calls them in mercy and in truth. They have one Father, one elder brother, who is not ashamed to call them *brethren*; and one spirit, who being a spirit of adoption, gives them all an interest in the same family, whereby they become joint heirs with Christ. The duties of unity, love, and compassion, which depend on their relation, are more known than practised. Of old, indeed, the Pagans spake proverbially of the Christians, "See how they love one another!" by way of admiration. The contrary observation hath now prevailed, to the shame and foul stain of the profession of these latter days. Through dissentions and divisions amongst them who are interested in the privilege of sonship, and through various visible defects in most that are called Christians, we have lost the thing intended, and the same is become a term of reproach. When iniquity abounds, love will wax cold. In the mean time, it were well if those who are brethren indeed, could *live* as brethren, and *love* as brethren, and *agree* as brethren; for the motives to it are great and many.

§11. *Obs.* 4. All true and real professors of the gospel are sanctified by the Holy Ghost, and made truly and really holy. So Paul here terms those Hebrews, exercising the judgment of charity; declaring what they ought to be, and what they professed themselves to be, what he believed them to be, and what if living members of Christ they really were.

§12. *Obs. 5.* No man comes to an useful saving knowledge of Jesus Christ in the gospel, but by virtue of an effectual heavenly calling. These Hebrews came to be holy brethren, children of God, united to Christ, by their participation of this heavenly vocation. We are called out of darkness into his marvellous light, not only with the outward call of the word, which many partake of who never attain the saving knowledge of Christ, but with that effectual call according to God's purpose of election, Rom. viii, 28; which is accompanied with the energetic power of the Holy Ghost, Ephes. ii, 5; giving eyes to see, ears to hear, and hearts to obey the word according to the covenant promise, Jer. xxxii, 33, 34.

§13. *Obs. 6.* The effectual heavenly vocation of believers is their great privilege, wherein they have cause to rejoice, and which ought always to remind them of their duty to him who hath called them. To this end the apostle reminds the Hebrews of their participation of the heavenly calling, that they might consider the privilege they enjoyed by the gospel, above whatever they boasted of under the law; and that he might stir them up to the performance of their duty in faith and obedience, as those who were called to light, life, liberty, and the peace of God; to his kingdom, righteousness, and eternal glory.

§14. *Obs. 7.* The spiritual mysteries of the gospel, especially those which concern the person and offices of Christ, require diligent and attentive consideration. Their nature, and worth, with our own condition, call for this duty; for, in their nature they are mysteries; that is, things deep, hidden, and full of Divine wisdom, 1 Cor. ii, 7. The wisdom of God is a mystery, such as the angels desire to bow down (not by way of condescension, but of endeavors) and look into, 1 Pet. i, 12;



for in Christ, and through him in the gospel, are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, Col. ii, 3; and hence are we directed to cry after knowledge, to apply our hearts to understanding, to seek her as silver, to search for her as hid treasures, Prov. ii, 3, 4. These things are not easily discovered by every wandering eye or lazy passenger; such persons find not mines of silver, or the hidden treasures of former generations. Of this diligent search the prophets and holy men of old are proposed for our example, 1 Pet. i, 10, 11; carnal sloth is not the way to be acquainted with spiritual things, or sacred mysteries. Again, the worth and importance of these things bespeak the same duty. Things may be dark and mysterious, and yet not weighty and worthy; so that they will not defray the charge of a diligent search after them. Solomon's merchants would not have gone to Ophir, had there not been gold, as well as apes and peacocks. There are unsearchable treasures in these mysteries; no tongue can fully express, no mind perfectly conceive them. There is in them an exceedingly valuable pearl, which, though by some rejected, is yet esteemed of God, elect and precious; and so also by all believers, 1 Pet. ii, 6, 7, "The merchandize thereof is better than the merchandize of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold; it is more precious than rubies." Moreover, our own condition calls for diligence in the discharge of this duty. We are for the most part like these Hebrews, chap. v, 11, slothful, or dull of hearing: we have a natural backwardness to that hearing whereby faith cometh, and therefore have the greatest need to stir up our minds to this important duty of consideration; while at the same time we have an object infinitely worthy of it,

Jesus Christ, who is the apostle and high priest of our profession.

§15. *Obs.* 8. The business of God with sinners could not be transacted but by the negotiation and embassy of his Son. He must become our apostle. He did, indeed, at sundry times, send servants and messengers into the world about this momentous affair, but there was a threefold greatness in it, which none was fit to manage effectually but the Son of God himself. And this was, (1.) A greatness of love, grace, and condescension. That the great and holy God should send to treat with sinners about peace and reconciliation, is a thing which all the rational creation must eternally admire. He is in himself holy, good, righteous, and blessed for evermore; he stood in no need of sinners, of their service, of their obedience, of their being; but he was justly provoked by their apostasy and rebellion. His justice and law required their punishment and destruction, which he could have inflicted to his own eternal glory; nor had they either inclination or ability to avert the deserved vengeance. Yet God will send a message to these poor perishing rebels; an embassy to treat with them about peace and reconciliation. But this is so great a thing, includes such infinite grace, love, and condescension, that sinners know not how to believe it. And, indeed, who is fit to announce the stupendous message? Objections arise against it that are able to shake the credit and reputation of any angel from heaven. Wherefore God commits this message to his Son, his only Son; makes him his apostle; sends him with these tidings, that they may be embraced. "The Son of God came and gave us this understanding." It is true that God spake by the mouth of his holy prophets from the beginning of the world, Luke i, 70; but yet, as the first

promise was given out by the Son of God himself, so all the messages of the prophets about this matter depended on that confirmation of them, which he was afterwards to give in his own person. So saith our apostle, Rom. xv, 8, "Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the Fathers."

§16. (2.) There is a greatness in the work itself, which required that the Son of God should be engaged therein. For, as the ambassador, he was perfectly to represent the person of the Father. An ambassador represents the person of him by whom he is sent. Other messengers were but (*anteambulones*) "forerunners," to give notice of the coming of this great apostle, or chief ambassador of God: but these were not to represent his person, nor could they: see Matt. iii, 1. Who could fully represent the person of the Father to sinners, but he who is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person? Hence he tells his disciples, that he who hath seen him hath seen the Father, John iv, 9, and that because he is so in the Father, and the Father in him, that he represents him fully unto men. He is "the image of the invisible God," Col. i, 16. The Father, who in his own person dwells in light unapproachable, hath exhibited and expressed the glorious properties of his nature to us in the person of his Son, 2 Cor. iv, 4. None else, then, was fit to be this great apostle.

Again; the greatness of the work requires, that he who undertakes it be intimately acquainted with all the secret counsels of God, those counsels that lay hid in his infinite wisdom and will from all eternity. None else could undertake so weighty a charge. But where shall we find a person thus qualified? It is true, God was pleased to reveal sundry particulars, the

effects of his counsels, to his servants the prophets; but yet it is concerning those that the Holy Ghost speaks, John i, 18, "No man hath seen God at any time:" Who then shall do it? "The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father." In his bosom; not only a sharer in his special love, but also a partaker of his most intimate counsels. He hath declared him; made him known, in his nature, his name, his will, his grace. He, and he alone, hath exhibited the eternal Father to our adoring faith.

Likewise; it was not enough that originally, as he was God, he knew all the deep things of Jehovah, but also as he was sent; for the wisdom and knowledge of Christ as mediator, exercised in the human nature, was distinct from his knowledge, as he was in himself God over all blessed for ever. And without this mediatorial knowledge, who could have been a meet apostle from God to sinners? For how else should he reveal to them the will of God, according to all emergencies and occasions? But as this was needful, so it was found in Jesus Christ the Son of God. The Spirit of the Lord rested upon him, not came upon him at times, but remained on him, John i, 32, 33. "The spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and of might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord," Isa. xi, 2, 3. It may be said, he possessed it in some remarkable degrees only above others. Nay, it is expressly affirmed, "God gave not the Spirit to him by measure," John iii, 34. Not in such way as that he should only have a greater measure of the Spirit than others; but in a way wholly different; he possessed the same Spirit in another kind: for "it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell," Col. i, 19; all fulness; not only of rich grace, but also of wisdom and counsel: and, accordingly, "in him are hid (laid

up safely) all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," Col. ii, 3.

Moreover; the nature of the work required, that the ambassador of God to sinners should be able to make his message successful. It is not sufficient to say, that the message itself is so great and so advantageous to sinners, that there is no doubt but upon the first proposal they will embrace it; for we find the contrary by multiplied experience: and not only so, but it is a certain fact that no sinner is able of himself to receive it. For faith is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God. Now if this ambassador hath not power to enable men to receive it, however otherwise excellent and glorious, it must needs be frustrated. But who shall effect this arduous task? Is it the work of man to quicken the dead, to open the blind eyes, to take away the stony heart, to create spiritual light in the mind, and life in the will? All this is necessary to insure saving success to God's message to sinners, and to this the Son of God alone was equal. For "no man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him," Matt. xi, 27; and this he doth by the effectual working of his holy Spirit, the dispensation whereof is wholly committed to him. Let it be farther considered, that,

§7. (3.) The design of this work was no less than to proclaim and establish peace between God and man. He only who made this peace was meet to make a full declaration of it: he is our peace, and he came and preached peace, Ephes. ii, 14—17, on which account he is called "the word of God," he by whom God was declared; the angel of God's presence, the interpreter, the great interpreter of Jehovah's mind, the counsellor, and the messenger of the covenant, as well as the apostle of our profession. And hence we see our great

obligations to hearken to this message; not only on account of the message itself, which is worthy of all acceptation, but also on account of him that brings it: and everlasting woe will be to them by whom these glad tidings are rejected. He that refuseth peace with God shall have war and his eternal wrath, and that most deservedly. It may be some men think in their hearts, that if they had heard Christ himself delivering this message, if they had heard him preaching this peace, they would undoubtedly have received and embraced it. So indeed thought the Jews of old, that if they had lived in the days of the former prophets, they would not have dealt with them as their forefathers did, but would have believed their words and obeyed their commands. So the rich man thought, that his brethren would repent, if one might rise from the dead and preach to them. All have pretences for their present unbelief; and suppose, that were it not for this or the other circumstance, they should do otherwise. But these pretences are all vain and foolish in any case, but there is no pretence of this nature that can take place here: for this great apostle and ambassador of God continueth yet to speak to us, and press his message upon us. So saith our apostle, chap. xii, 25, "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh; for how shall we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven?" He did not only speak of old, but he continueth to speak in the word of the gospel. When we are pressed to believe, to accept the appointed terms of peace, and yet refuse them; we reject this great, this Divine and compassionate apostle. And what will be the end of such men? What will be the end of us all, if the guilt hereof should be found upon us?

§18. *Obs.* 9. Special privileges will not profit men without special grace. The Lord Christ was in an

especial manner an apostle to the Jews, to them was he sent immediately; and to them was his ministry in the flesh confined. Greater privileges could none partake of; and what was the issue? "He came unto his own, and his own received him not," John i, 11; by far the greatest part of them rejected both him and the tidings of peace he brought. This is worthy your consideration who are favored with precious gospel privileges. They will not save you; but, on the contrary, they may ruin you. Look for grace to make them effectual, lest they prove the "savor of death unto death" to any of you. Once more,

§19. *Obs.* 10. The Lord Jesus Christ is all in all to his church; the king, priest, apostle, (or prophet) of it; all in one; supplying all wants, answering all privileges, the spring of all grace, effecting all mercy; so that in him alone believers are complete, Col. ii, 10. The Old Testament saints had no one that was king, priest, and prophet to the church; nor could any be after the giving of the law; the kingdom being promised to the tribe of Judah, and the priesthood confined to the tribe of Levi, and the house of Aaron. Who sees not then herein the great privilege of the New Testament economy, seeing we have all these things really, which they had only in type; and all things centering in one, which were imperfectly distributed among so many? And shall we not seek for all in him, who was represented by them all? Shall we not seek to be perfectly justified by him who is really and substantially all in one? Yes, all our defects, weaknesses, and troubles arise from hence, that we make not our applications to him for that assistance which he is able, ready, and willing to afford us.

§20. *Obs.* 11. A diligent attentive consideration of the person, offices, and works of Jesus Christ is the

most effectual means to free the souls of men from all entanglements of error and darkness, and to keep them constant in the profession of the truth. These Hebrews were as yet entangled in their old Judaism, and ready to decline from the truth. To free them from the one, and to prevent the other, the apostle calls them to the consideration of what he had delivered, and what he was yet to deliver concerning the person, offices, and works of Christ. This being the principal intention of the place, we shall stay a little to confirm and apply our observation.

§21. "Consider Christ." And here we shall take notice of both the manner and the object of this consideration. As to the manner of attending to the means proposed, it is our incumbent duty,

1. To make a diligent search into the sacred word, wherein Jesus Christ is revealed to us, (which is therefore called the gospel of Christ) that we may find out and understand what is revealed concerning him, as he is the end of the law, and the fulness of the gospel; in whom, as in their common centre, all the prophecies and promises meet. Without this aim in our hearing, reading, and searching of the word, we labor in vain, and contend uncertainly, as men beating the air. Unto him, and the knowledge of him, is all our study of the scripture to be referred: and the reason why some in the perusal of it, have no more light, profit, or advantage, is, because they have no more respect to Christ in their inquiry. If he be once out of our eye in searching the scripture, we know not what we do, nor whither we go, no more than doth the mariner at sea without regard to the pole star. Truths to be believed are like believers themselves; all their life, power, and order consist in their relation to Christ; separated from him they are dead and useless.



2. *Meditation* upon what is discovered to us concerning Christ, is also included in this duty. When a revelation was made of Christ and his work to the blessed virgin his mother, it is said she kept the sayings and “pondered them in her heart,” Luke ii, 17; as Job adviseth all to do, chap. xxii, 22; and the apostle bids us take care that “the word of Christ dwell in us richly in all wisdom,” Col. iii, 6; that it may not pass through our minds with some transient effects; as in reading and hearing, if alone, it often only casts some glances of light upon the understanding, or some motions on the affections; but may make its abode with us by constant meditation.

3. A spiritual endeavor in this search and meditation to bring the soul to a real *conformity* with that revelation which is made of Christ in the word. And this would be the genuine effect of them, if duly and properly attended, 2 Cor. iii, 18. The glory of Christ is revealed in the gospel, as a face is represented in a glass; this we behold by a spiritual search and meditation. By this intuition we are assimilated to the revealed glory of the Lord. The Holy Ghost thereby brings upon our hearts that very likeness and image which we so contemplate.

§22. The *object* of this consideration is the Redeemer, in his person, his offices, and his work. “Consider *Christ*.”

1. The apostle treateth about his *person* as the principal object of our consideration. It is a signal promise that under the gospel we shall see the King Messiah in his beauty, Isa. xxxiii, 17; or, by faith see the uncreated excellencies and glories of this King of saints. And indeed the faith of the Old Testament saints did principally respect the glorious person of the Messiah, and his coming, leaving his work, and the mystery of

redemption, to his own wisdom and grace. Hence had they so many glorious descriptions of him to excite their desire and expectation concerning him. And now under the New Testament it is the greatest trial of faith, whether it be evangelical, genuine, and thriving, to know what respect it hath to the person of Christ: if that be its immediate and principal *object*, if it respect other things with regard to him, and in subordination to him, it is assuredly of an heavenly extract; if otherwise, it may justly be suspected. How glorious this object of faith! he, though the lofty One inhabiting eternity, humbled himself into the form of a man, of a servant, unto death, the death of the cross. A due mixture of greatness and grace, or goodness, is the most powerful attractive of virtuous and gracious affections. Hence God, who is infinitely great and infinitely good, is their ultimate object. In the person of Christ this is inimitably displayed, so that there is nothing in the vast creation adapted to represent him to us: see Rev. i, 5, 6, 11, 13, 16. He who is Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the Prince of the kings of the earth, even he hath loved us, and washed us in his own blood! Hence to a believing soul he becomes white and ruddy, the chiefest of ten thousand, Cant. v, 2.

2. Consider him as to his *offices*. His authority as a king, his mercifulness as our high priest, and his faithfulness as a prophet, or God's apostle, are the important particulars that call for our believing and affectionate consideration.

His *authority* as King, Lord, and Heir of all. His dealing with the Hebrews was principally about the institution of new ordinances of worship and abolishing the old. This sovereign authority the Lord Messiah was completely furnished with, and a due consid-

eration hereof, would thoroughly remove all doubts and scruples in this matter; whereas the neglect of it is the cause of all that confusion and disorder which at this day fill the professing world about the worship of God.

His *mercifulness*, as the high priest of his church. This is of singular use to preserve believers from decays and faintings in the profession of the truth. Want of a due improvement of this encouraging consideration, and the assistance that may be obtained thereby, is the occasion of all the decays and backslidings that are found among professors. What can thrive in the soul, if the love, care, kindness, and ability to save, that are in Christ, all which are included in this mercifulness, are neglected? His *faithfulness*; this relates to his prophetic office; if he be absolutely faithful in his work, his authority and mercy ought surely to be diligently heeded. Men may thence learn what they have to do in the church and worship of God, even to observe and to do whatever he hath commanded.

3. As his person and offices, so his *work* also is proposed to our consideration. The particulars of this work are too many to be here so much as recounted; in general the love and grace that beam in it, its greatness, the benefits we receive from it, the glory of the wisdom, goodness, holiness, and righteousness that shine therein with superior lustre, are the principal immediate objects of our faith and consideration. And although we may not at once clearly and fully discern them, yet we are in the proper way to know and possess them. There is not the least line of truth, how far soever it may be extended, and how small soever it may at length appear, but the springs of it lie in the person and work of Christ; and then we learn it aright when we learn it in the spring; or, "as it is in him."

Eph. iv, 21; which when we have done, we may safely trace it to its utmost extent. But he that looks on gospel truths as scattered up and down independently one of another, who sees not the root and centre of them in Jesus Christ, it is most probable that when he goes about to gather them for his use, he will also take up things quite of another nature. They say that all moral virtues are knit in one, that is, *righteousness*, so that he who hath that, hath all the rest, at least radically and virtually. This I know, that all spiritual truths are centered in him who is the truth. And they who have "learned him," as the apostle speaks, Eph. iv, 20, have with him received the seeds of the truth, which being watered and attended as they ought, will in due time flourish in all their proper branches and fruits. Thus in particular is faith increased. For according as the object of it is cleared and manifested, or truly represented as suitable and desirable to the soul, so is faith excited and strengthened. Now this is no otherwise done, but when the soul is enabled graciously to consider the person and offices of Christ. There it finds all that is needful to make it happy and blessed, to procure pardon and peace, righteousness and glory. Hence,

§23. We may deduce some profitable uses for information, caution, and direction.

1. For information; we may see hence the reason why so many turn aside and fall off from the truth and ways of the gospel. They have given over a due consideration of Jesus Christ, and so have lost the means of their preservation. They have been weary of him, not seeing a form or loveliness in him for which he should be desired. For when men have neglected the person of Christ, is it any wonder if they despise his ways and ordinances, as is their manner?

Indeed the ordinances of the gospel, its worship and institutions, have no excellency, no beauty in them, but what ariseth from their relation to the person and offices of Christ; and if these are neglected, these must needs be burdensome and grievous. And as it is with gospel worship, so it is with all the articles of faith, or the important truths we are to believe. The centre and knot of them all is in the person of Christ, if they are once loosed from thence, if their union in him be once dissolved, if men no more endeavor to learn the truth as it is in Jesus, or to acquaint themselves with the will of God, as he hath gathered all things unto an head in him, they scatter, as it were, of their own accord from their minds; so that it may be they retain no one of them; or if they do, yet not in a right manner, so as to have the experience of the power of them in obedience. This is the cause of the apostasies amongst us; Christ is neglected, not considered, not improved: if we search into the root of our distempers, we shall find that our hearts and spirits have not been exercised with that consideration of the person and offices of Christ which our duty calls for. We have not been kept in a constant adoration of his majesty, admiration of his excellency, delight in his beauty, joy in his undertaking, holy thoughtfulness of his whole mediation: this has betrayed us into lukewarmness and indifferency, and made us faint and weary in his ways. The next use is,

2. For *caution*. The world smiles upon apostates and promiseth a plentiful supply of such things as corrupt nature esteems desirable; errors and false worship, spread their wings of glorious pretences over the whole world. Trials, troubles, storms, persecutions attend and threaten on every hand; and he only that endureth unto the end shall be saved. He that like Jonah

is asleep in this tempest, is at the door of ruin; he that is secure in himself from danger, is in the greatest danger of falling by security. What then shall we do, what means shall we use for our preservation? Take the counsel of our blessed apostle. "Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the apostle and high priest of our profession." And again, chap. xii, 3, "Consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest you be weary and faint in your minds." Be much, therefore, in the consideration of the person, offices, and work of Christ. This will conform you unto him, this will derive strength from him, will arm you with the same mind that was in him, increase all your graces, keep you from being faint, and give you assured victory. He deserves it, you need it, let it not be omitted. Another use is,

3. For *direction*. This will give direction to them who are called to the work of teaching others. For that which is the chief object of the church's faith, ought to be the chief subject of our preaching. So Paul tells the Galatians, that in his preaching Christ was evidently crucified before their eyes, Gal. iii, 1. He proposed Christ crucified to their consideration, determining, as he speaks in another place, to know nothing amongst them but Jesus Christ and him crucified. For if the consideration of Christ be such an important duty in believers, certainly the due proposal of him to their consideration is no less in preachers; Christ alone is to be preached *absolutely*, and all other truths, as they begin, end, and centre in him. To propose the Lord Christ amiable, desirable, useful, and every way worthy of acceptation is the great duty of the dispensers of the gospel.

## VERSE 3.

*For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honor than the house.*

§1. The apostle's reasoning stated. §2, 3. (I.) He supposeth Moses worthy of glory. §4, 5. (II.) Christ worthy of more glory, with the proof of it. §6. (III.) Observations, 1 Every faithful servant of God is worthy of honor §7. The unfaithful not so. §8. 2. Christ is worthy of all glory on account of his building the church. §9---11. (1.) What this glory, and its formal reason. §12---14. (2) What the great motive for ascribing to him this glory.

§1. **T**HE apostle proceeds in this verse and the three following, with his design of evidencing the excellency and preference of Christ above Moses, as he had done before in reference to angels, and all other revealers of the will of God to the church. The first word (*γὰρ*) "for," denotes the connexion of the discourse; consider him, saith he, "for he is worthy of more glory than Moses." The church being called the "house of God," and that by God himself; the apostle takes advantage of the metaphor to express the dignity of Christ. He that buildeth the house, hath more honor than the house. The assumption included is this, But Christ built the house, and Moses was only a servant of the house, or a part of it, and therefore he had more glory than Moses. In confirmation of the first argument the 4th verse is inserted; "for every house is builded by some, but he that built all things is God."

"For this (man) was counted worthy of more glory than Moses." Here lies the proposition wherein two things occur:

1. A supposition that Moses was counted worthy.
2. An assertion, that the Lord Jesus Christ was much more worthy of glory.

§2. (I.) The apostle grants and supposeth that Moses was (*αξιωθεὶς δόξης*) "counted worthy of glory," or truly glorious and honorable. "Glory," is (*excellentis*.

*virtutis fama cum laude,*) “the illustrious fame of an excellency with praise;” and in this “glory” there are two things, an excellency deserving honor, and the reputation of that excellency.

1. The excellency of Moses consisted principally in his work, and his fidelity. In his work; this was glorious, and rendered him so as being employed in it. So our apostle declares, 2 Cor. iii, 7, “The ministration of death written and engraven in stones was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance.” And one part of his ministration is called the “glory,” Rom. ix, 4. The giving of the law, the erection of the visible church state in the posterity of Abraham, attended with all that glorious worship which was instituted therein, was a work of exceeding glory. In this work was Moses employed in so honorable a manner as to be the sole mediator therein between God and the people, Gal. iii, 19. As himself speaketh, Deut. v, 5, “I stood between the Lord and you at that time, to shew you the word of the Lord.” This was his peculiar glory, that singled him out from amongst all the posterity of Abraham, to be thus employed. But this excellency farther consisted in his fidelity; this, added to the former, makes his dignity complete. It is no glory for a man to be employed in a glorious work and to miscarry therein; it will rather end in his dishonor and reproach. Such may not improperly be compared to Phaeton the son of Apollo, in the fable, who, though dissuaded from it, would needs drive the chariot of the sun; but the rash attempt ended in his ruin. Better never be employed in the work of God, than deal unfaithfully in it. But a glorious trust connected with skill and great faithfulness render a condition really excellent.



So was it with Moses. However he might fail personally, he failed not ministerially, as the *internuntius*, between God and his people; for every personal failing in faith doth not impeach a man's faithfulness in his office. In these things was he excellent, O what a glorious thing is it to be faithful in any office or trust committed to us by our Divine master!

§3. (2.) He had the fame and reputation of that excellency, by the verdict of God, and the esteem of the church. His reputation was founded on the infallible testimony of God: this God gave him during his life, and sundry times after his death: this is the great foundation of all his renown. And what greater honor could be done to any creature, than to be adorned with such an illustrious testimony by God himself? Greater honor had none, but he with whom he is compared. And even thus we may say God "gives grace and glory." Grace to be faithful, and a glory upon men's being so. Besides, his reputation sprung from the esteem of the church. Until the Son himself came, the whole church of God was precisely bound to observe the laws and ordinances appointed by him, on which all their happiness depended. That was the condition of their temporal and eternal welfare; the neglect hereof exposed them to all misery from God and man. This was the charge that God left them throughout all their generations; "Remember the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments," Mal. iv, 4. This made his name and remembrance honorable to the church, and the sinful abuse of it turned afterwards to the snare and disadvantage of the incredulous Jews; according to the prophetic imprecation of the psalmist, "Let their table (or their ta-

ble shall) become a snare before them, and that which should have been for their welfare become a trap," Psalm lxi, 22, which our apostle declares to have befallen them on their rejecting the gospel, through an obstinate adherence to the letter of the law of Moses; Rom. ix, 18, 19. Yet we may observe, that in all the honor which God gave Moses in the church, he never commanded, he never allowed, that any should worship him or pray to him. Should we add hereunto some other particulars, they will make this glory still more conspicuous. Such, for instance, was the care of God over him in his infancy, his miraculous call to his office, the honor he had in the world, the miracles which he wrought, and the signal testimony given him from God in all the contests about his ministry; and many things of the like nature might be added. But they are the things which appertain to his office and the discharge of it, which are principally intended.

This, therefore, the apostle fully grants, not giving the least suspicion to the Hebrews, that he meant to detract from the due praises and honor of Moses, as he was commonly traduced. The unbelieving part of them, indeed, boasted of Moses to the contempt of Christ, John ix, 29, "We know that God spake unto Moses; as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is." And they generally thought the prevalency of the gospel was derogatory to his honor and law, Acts xiii, 45—50. But these things did not move him to deal partially in the truth. He allows Moses his due honor and glory, and yet asserts the excellency of Christ above him, shewing evidently the consistency of these things, as there neither is nor can be any opposition or contrariety between any ordinances or institutions of God. Let us now proceed to consider.

§4. (II.) What is positively affirmed in this assertion, with the proof of it; that the Lord Jesus Christ was much more worthy of glory than Moses.

The demonstrative pronoun (*εἶς*) "*this*," is rendered *this man*; but it respects him not merely as man, but directs to his person, God and man.

"Was counted worthy of more glory than Moses," (*δοξῆς πλειονοσπαρα Μοσην*) *of much more glory than Moses*. The expression intimates the glory of Christ to be so far above that of Moses, that in comparison thereof it might even seem to be no glory, see 2 Cor. iii, 10.

"Accounted worthy" (*εξιώσαι*) *was more honored*, had more glory from God, was more glorious in the church.

This glory, though attendant on the person of Christ, is that which directly belongs to him in his office, wherein alone he is now compared with Moses. Having made the assertion, the apostle proceeds to the proof of it in the next words:

"He who builds an house, is more honorable than the house built;" but Christ built the house, whereas Moses was only a part of it.

The intended glory of Christ, the apostle sets forth under the metaphorical terms of an house, its building, and its builder. The church of God, with all the ordinances of worship in it, are an house, as appears in the foregoing testimony; now this is the condition of an house, that he who builds it is much more honorable than the house itself. But this house of God was built by Jesus Christ, whereas Moses was only a part of the house itself, and so no way to be compared with him in honor and glory. When one builds an house by his own authority, for his own use, whereby it becomes his own house, and wholly at his own disposal, there he is always more honorable than the house

itself; and therefore Christ, who thus built his house, is more honorable than Moses.

It is supposed in the assumption that Moses was not a builder. But how can that be? For what was wanting to render him a builder? The reply is easy: By the house of God in this place the apostle doth not intend the house of this or that particular age, under this or that form or administration of worship; but the house of God in all ages and places, from the foundation to the end of the world, a building erected with supreme power, and for the builder's own use.

§5. On the contrary, Christ built the church in the properest and highest sense. For the building of the house of God three things are required, the pattern, the materials, its appropriation and dedication to God; as in the typical houses, the tabernacle of Moses, and the temple of Solomon. All these particulars were perfectly effected by Jesus Christ the Son of God. "On this rock," saith he, "I will build my church," Matt. xvi, 18.

1. He was in the eternal counsels of the Father, about providing and framing this habitation for himself. And this glorious delineation or pattern he had in his mind in all ages, and this he brought with him into the world, when he came to put the last hand to it. This answered the (תבנית) *idea* represented to Moses on the mount. He under every dispensation, expressed this conception of his mind when he gave out laws, orders, ordinances, and institutions of worship, the whole pattern of the house as it were, in divers manners, and at sundry seasons, to be erected.

2. The second thing required in the building of this house is the providing of materials, and the framing and compacting of them into a house for God. Now this was a great work indeed, considering the condition of all those persons of whom this house was to be consti-

tuted; they were dead in trespasses and sins; but the house was to be a "living house," 1 Pet. ii, 5. They were all enemies to God, strangers from him, and under his curse; but this house was to be made up of the friends of God, and such as he may delight to dwell in. Dead stones must be made of the children of Abraham. This then was a great and glorious work, and which none could perform but he that was unspeakably more honorable than Moses, or all the sons of men. He doth not gather men by force or violence, or drive them together to the profession of truth with the sword. No: the living stones, being brought together by their own offering themselves willingly to the Lord, are by him, as the tabernacle was of old, fitly framed together into an holy habitation for God. In Christ, the Lord and builder of this house, there is resident a spirit of life, which by him is communicated to every stone of the house, and which gives it life, union to himself, and also order and beauty in reference to the whole; that is, being all alike united to Christ and actuated in their places and order by one spirit, they become one house for God.

3. That the house so built and compacted might be an habitation fit for God, it was necessary that an atonement should be made for it by sacrifice, and that it be purified and sanctified with the blood thereof. Thus, Christ made atonement for it by the sacrifice of himself, and sprinkled it wholly with his own blood, as the scriptures abundantly testify. The tabernacle, being erected and sprinkled with blood, was also, with all its utensils, anointed with the holy oil, Exod. xl, 9—11. This unction was a type of the Holy Ghost, who is the oil of gladness wherewith Christ himself, and all his living members, were to be anointed. To the completing of this house for a settled habitation to the Lord,

the glorious entrance of his presence into it was required. And this also is accomplished by him according to his promise, that he will be with us, among us, and dwell in us by his Spirit to the end of the world.

Hence,

§6. (III.) *Obs.* 1. Every one who is employed in the service of God's house, and is faithful in the discharge of it, is worthy of honor; so was Moses. And this becometh both the greatness and goodness of God; and he hath established it by an everlasting law, "Them that honor me," saith he, "I will honor; and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed," 1 Sam. ii, 30. The honoring of God in the service of his house, shall be honored, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. They are honorable; for

(1.) Their work is so: reputation, glory, and honor, attend honorable works. This work is God's. The church is God's husbandry, God's building, 1 Cor. iii, 9. They have a great work in hand, and have a glorious associate, even God himself. God so works by them, as that he also works with them, and they are (*συνεργοὶ Θεοῦ*) "laborers together with God;" they work also in the name and on the behalf of God, 2 Cor. v, 20. Whatever glory and honor that can possibly redound to any from the nature of the work wherein they are employed, it all belongs to them. Hence the apostle commands that we should "esteem such very highly for their works' sake," 1 Thes. v, 13. Their work makes them worthy of estimation, yea, of "double honor," 1 Tim. v, 17.

(2.) Honor is reflected upon them from their relation to Christ, who goes before them in their work. To be associated with Christ in his work, to share in office under him, will appear at length to have been honorable. The queen of Sheba counted them happy and

blessed, who were servants to Solomon, and stood before him, 2 Chron. ix, 7. And what are they who stand before him who is infinitely wiser and greater than Solomon! The Lord help poor ministers to believe their relation to Christ, and his engagement with them in their work, that they may be supported against those innumerable discouragements they meet with.

(3.) The special nature of their work and employment is another spring of honor to them: it lies about things holy, spiritual, mysterious, and more excellent than all the things of this world; it is their work to discover, and to bring forth to light unsearchable riches, Ephes. iii, 8; to reveal and to declare the whole counsel of God, Acts xx, 27; to prepare and make ready the bride for the Lamb, to gather in God's revenue of glory.

(4.) The effects of their work also communicate honor to them. The ministry of the word is that alone whereby God will ordinarily treat with men for salvation; this he makes use of for their conviction, conversion, sanctification, and salvation; and in these effects of the Christian ministry will the glory of God be principally concerned for ever: in them will his goodness, righteousness, grace, mercy, patience, and all the other excellencies of his nature shine forth in glory. How honorable then that ministry, the grand design of which is to produce these everlasting effects?

(5.) Their special honor will one day appear in their special reward, Dan. xii, 13. Instructors, teachers, they that make men wise, that give them understanding, "shall shine as the brightness of the firmament;" and the justifiers of many, those that make them righteous ministerially, by revealing to them the knowledge and righteousness of Christ, whereby they are justified, Isa. liii, 11; "as the stars for ever and ever." If they

have not more glory than others, yet they shall have a distinct glory of their own. For when the prince of shepherds shall be manifested, he will give these his shepherds an unfading "crown of glory," 1 Pet. v, 4; alluding to, but infinitely transcending, such a peculiar crown, as great triumphant conquerors were wont to be crowned with.

§7. Only it must be observed, that there is nothing of all this spoken, merely with respect to being employed in this house of God, but only to faithfulness in the employment. Some are so far from being worthy of honor, that they deserve nothing but reproach, contempt, and shame. For as God saith in this matter, "Him that honoreth me, I will honor;" so he adds, "he that despiseth me shall be lightly esteemed." Such persons are rejected of God, as to any acceptance in their office, Hos. vi, 4; and as unsavory salt, are to be cast on the dunghill, Matt. v, 13. These servants, when the Lord comes, he will tear in pieces and give them their portion with hypocrites, Matt. xxiv, 50, 51. Persons, therefore, who undertake to be builders in the house of God, and who have received no skill or ability from the Master builder, or are negligent in their work, or corrupt it, or daub with untempered mortar, or are any way unfaithful; whatever double or treble advantage they may obtain of men in this world, they shall have nothing but shame and confusion of face from God in that which is to come. Let those then who are indeed faithful in this work, be satisfied with the work itself. It will prove in the end to have been a good revenue, a blessed inheritance: add but that reward which the Lord Christ brings with him, to the reward of honor that is in the work itself, and it will be abundantly satisfactory. We dishonor our Master, and manifest that we understand not the nature of our



work, when we are solicitous about any other recompense. And this will serve to, strengthen such persons in all the oppositions they meet, and all the discouragements they are encompassed with, in the discharge of their duty. It is enough to give them an holy contempt and scorn of the worst that can befall them. And this also may teach others their duty towards them, which for the most part they are unwilling to hear, and more unwilling to practise.

§8. *Obs. 2.* The Lord Christ is worthy of all glory and honor, on account of his thus building his church, the house of God.

1. He hath an essential glory, the same with that of the Father, antecedent to his whole undertaking to build the house of God. He and his Father are one, John x, 30; before his humiliation he was "in the form of God, and counted it no robbery to be equal with God," Phil. ii, 6; equal in dignity and glory, because of the same nature, which is the fountain of all Divine glory and honor. But this is not the glory intended. Had this house never been built, yet he would have been thus glorious to eternity.

2. There is in Christ the glory and honor of the human nature, as glorified after its obedience and suffering. This nature was rendered glorious by virtue of its union with the Son of God from his incarnation, as expressed by the angel, Luke i, 35. Neither is this absolutely considered, the glory and honor here intended: for the glory we are now investigating, is not merely that which he hath in himself, but that which is due to him from, and given him by the church. Therefore,

3. Christ is honorable and glorious in his exaltation, as the head of the church. Hereby is he the "first born of every creature," or Lord and heir of the whole

creation. And which renders this exaltation reasonable, is taken from the dignity of his person absolutely considered, and the infiniteness of his power. Hence the equity, that, having fulfilled the work assigned him, he should enjoy the matchless glory here ascribed to him. This requires further explication, and to this purpose let us inquire,

1. What is this glory of Christ, with respect to the church built by him, and the formal reason of it?

2. What is the great motive whereby we are engaged and obliged to give him this glory?

§9. (1.) What this glory or honor of Christ is with respect to the church, or the house built by him, and the formal reason of it? And this may be considered briefly, in respect of the collation of it upon him, its nature, and its formal reason.

1. This glory of Christ as the builder of the church is conferred upon him, by the will and actual donation of the Father; "He raised him from the dead and gave him glory," 1 Pet. i, 21; it was his will, that glory and honor should be ascribed to him; for so he speaks concerning the whole intelligent creation. As for angels; he saith, "Let all the angels of God worship him," chap. i, 6; and for man, "The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son, that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father," John v, 22, 23. So that this glory is conferred upon Christ as the builder of the church by the grant and donation of the Father, and according to his will, by angels and men.

2. As to the nature of this glory, it consists in this, that he is the object of all Divine religious worship; and the principal author of all the laws thereof; whereby it is outwardly and solemnly celebrated or performed. Hence there is a twofold duty incumbent on the

church in reference to him who is the builder of it. (1.) That we serve him, trust him, believe in him, obey him with all religious subjection of soul and conscience. Hence saith he, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me," John xxiv, 1. Ye believe in God the Father who sent me, believe also in me who am sent, with the same Divine faith and confidence. (2.) That we observe all his commands, laws, and institutions as the great Sovereign Lord over our souls and consciences in all things. For "to this end Christ both died and rose, and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and the living," Rom. xiv, 9. Supreme Lord over us whilst alive, requiring obedience to all his laws as a son over his own house; and when we are dead, to raise us again and bring us to his judgment seat.

§10. 3. We come now to inquire concerning this glory, what is the formal reason of it; that which renders him a meet object of the church's worship, and that worship to be truly Divine or religious. The answer is short and plain; it is no other than the *Divine nature*. The natural and essential excellencies of the Deity are the formal reason and proper object of all Divine worship. We worship the Lord Christ who is God and man in one person, and his *person* who is God and man is the object of that worship; but the formal reason of it is the Divine nature in that person. Give me leave to say, God himself could not command that Christ be worshipped with Divine religious adoration, were he not God by nature, for the thing itself implies a contradiction. Religious worship is nothing but an assignation of that honor which is due to Divine excellencies; namely, to trust, fear, obey, love, and submit to infinite holiness, goodness, righteousness, and power; in the first cause, last end, and sovereign Lord of all. Now to assign glory proper to Divine excel-

lencies, and which receiveth its nature from its object, where Divine excellencies are not, is openly contradictory. Besides, God hath said, "I am the Lord, that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another," Isa. xlii, 8. He that hath not the name of God, that is, his nature, shall not, nor can have this glory which is to be the object of the worship mentioned. And there are not scarcely more gross idolators in the world, than those who profess to worship Christ and to believe in him, in a word, to give him all the glory that is due to God, and yet deny him to be such.

§11. Now in our worship of Christ, which is our assignation of glory to him, he is considered two ways:

1. *Absolutely*, as he is over all, God blessed for ever, Rom. ix, 5. In that respect he is the proper and ultimate object of our worship. We believe in him, pray to him; as Stephen, who offered his dying prayer to him in particular. They stoned Stephen praying or invoking, in these words, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," Acts viii, 9. So are we baptized in his name, and thereby initiated into his service as our Lord and our God. So may we pray to him directly and distinctly, making his person the ultimate object of our faith, trust, and subjection of soul. See Ephes. v, 23, 24, 25; 2 Cor. v, 15; Tit. ii, 14; Rom. xiv, 9—18.

2. We consider him as mediator between the Father and us. So he is the immediate, but not the ultimate object of our worship. In this sense through him we believe in God, who raised him from the dead, and gave him glory, that our faith and hope may be in God, 1 Pet. i, 21. He is the means of our faith and hope. By him we have access by one spirit unto the Father, Ephes. ii, 18. And according to his command, we ask of God in his name and for his sake, John xvi, 23—25; and in this sense in all our worship,

internal and external, in our faith, confidence, obedience, and supplications, the Father is considered as the ultimate object of our worship, and the Son as he who hath procured acceptance for us, who pleads our cause, manageth our affairs, and prevails for grace and mercy. And this is the most ordinary and standing way of faith in the worship of God. We address ourselves to the Father by the Son as mediator, considering him as vested with mediatory offices over the house of God. This the apostle excellently expresseth, Eph. iii, 14. However we may address our petitions directly to Christ as he is God equal with the Father; and we may address the Father by him, as he is our mediator; which two modes of Divine worship are scriptural.

§12. (2.) Having considered the formal reason of the glory insisted on; we are next to inquire after the *great* motive to our giving him this glory, which make him worthy of it, and obligeth us in special duty to give it. God manifested in the flesh, Christ complete, his Divine and human nature in one person, is the object of our religious adoration and worship; and it is just and right that we should constantly worship him because he hath built the house of God; or because of his work of mediation. As it is in the first command, so it is in this matter, "I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage: thou shalt have no other gods before me," Exod. xx, 2, 3; declaring himself to be Lord God, he proposeth the formal reason of all religious worship, and that which makes it indispensably necessary; but yet, to stir the people up to the actual performance of it, he adds that great motive, what he had done for them; he had "brought them out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage."

Had he not done so, all worship and honor Divine were due to him, but having done so, it is a strong obligation to bind them to diligence in its observance. So I say in this matter, Christ is to be worshipped, because he is God; but the great motive thereunto is what he hath done for us in the work of redemption. And to all we have said in this matter, we have the joint testimony of all the saints and angels of God, Rev. v, 8—13. “And when he had taken the book, the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints. And they sang a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book and open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred and tongue, and people and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth. And I beheld and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures and the elders, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousand of thousands, saying with a loud voice, worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.”

The whole of what we have asserted is here confirmed. For the Lamb here is Jesus Christ the mediator, “the Lamb of God that took away the sins of the world.” The worship and honor ascribed to him is holy, sacred, and religious, and that from the whole

creation. It is but one and the same worship that is given to the Lamb, and to him that sits upon his throne, even the Father. The great motive to it, whence it is said he is worthy of it, is, because of the great things he hath done for us, in our redemption and salvation; that is, his building of the house of God. To close this matter; here lies a great difference between Christ and Moses, that whereas the work of the latter brought all the honor and glory he had to his person, and which yet was but an inferior work, the work of a servant or ministerial builder; the person of the former brought glory and honor to his work, although it was very excellent and glorious; for he condescended and humbled himself to it, Phil. ii, 6—8. But yet the work being done, is a cause of giving new honor and glory to his person.

§13. It remains only, that I briefly give the *reasons* why this building of the house renders the Redeemer so worthy of glory and honor: it doth so because the work itself was great and glorious. Great works make the authors of them famous and honorable. Hence have been the endeavors of men to eternize their names, to make themselves famous and renowned by their works and buildings. This was one end of that stupendous enterprise of the children of men in the building of Babel; they would build a tower to make themselves “a name,” Gen. xi, 4, to get them renown and glory; and they have been imitated by their posterity, who in all ages have praised their saying. So Nebuchadnezzar testifieth concerning himself, Dan. iv, 30, “Is not this, saith he, great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power and for the honor of my majesty?” But alas, what poor perishing heaps have been the products of their endeavors. They have all long ago

been made the spoils of time and confusion. When Solomon went about to build a material typical house for God, he told Hiram the king of Tyre, that the house which he built was very great; for, saith he, "Great is our God above all gods," 2 Chron. ii, 5, 6. But he adds, moreover, "Who is able to build him an house, seeing the heaven, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain him?" Who am I then that I should build him an house, save only to burn sacrifice before him? The use of this house is not for God to dwell in, but for us to worship him in. Do not conceive that I am building a temple as the nations build theirs for their false deities, to confine them to place, and keep them within walls. The immensity of the nature of *our* God will admit of no such thing. It is only a place for his service that I intend. But now Christ hath built an house for God to dwell in for ever; and this on many accounts was a greater work than that of the creation of all things out of nothing. But if from the ancient work of creation was to arise an immense fund of glory to God according to the law of nature; how excellent is this honor which ariseth to Jesus Christ, and to God by him, from his *new creation*; from his forming and creating "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness!"

§14. It is glorious in all respects. Who can express the glory, the beauty, and the order of this work? The tabernacle with the temple of old, and all their furniture were exceeding glorious; but they and their worship had no glory, in comparison of the more excellent glory of this spiritual house, 2 Cor. iii, 10. It is glorious in its foundation, which is Christ himself. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ," 1 Cor. iii, 2. This is the rock on which the house is built, Matt. xvi, 18. He "laid in Zion



for a foundation, “a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation,” Isa. xxviii, 16. So glorious, that when he is brought forth, those concerned in this building shout with holy triumph, crying, Grace! grace! unto it; Zech. iv, 7. And it is glorious in its superstructure; it is built up of living stones, 1 Pet. ii, 4, which also are precious and elect; cemented among themselves, and wrought into beauty and order by the Spirit of God. It is also glorious in respect of its end, as being that on account of which God will be for ever glorified in an eminent degree. It comes into the place of the whole creation, and doubles the revenue of glory unto God. Our duty is to bear in mind this honor and glory of Christ; as that to which he is exalted, and that of which he is every way worthy. In this also our honor is included; for if any one member of the mystical body being honored, all the members rejoice with it, 1 Cor. xii, 26, how much more have all the members cause to rejoice in this unspeakable honor and glory of their head, whence all their honor in particular flows.

VERSES 4—6.

*For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God; and Moses verily was faithful in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after: But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.*

§1. The subject stated, and (I.) The several parts of the words explained. §2. 1. What intended by, all things §3. 2. Who intended by the term, God. §4. The comparison between Christ and Moses. 1. Moses was a servant, faithful in all the house of God, for a testimony. §5. 2. Christ as a son over his own house. §6. Whose house are we. §7. If we hold fast. §8—10. A description of those who are of the house of God. §11—18. Observations and improvement.

§1. **T**HE connexion of the words will be made sufficiently plain in the exposition of their several parts. We shall, therefore, proceed immediately; first, to ex-

plain the apostle's meaning in the passage; and, secondly, raise such observations as appear naturally implied in it.

(I.) "Every house is builded by some one, but he that built all things is God." In this verse the apostle confirms and illustrates what he had before asserted and proved. If that building of the house be such as we have described, the building of the church in all ages, who could perform it? To whom must this work belong? Why, saith he, "he who built all things is God." Two things are here to be inquired into; first, what is intended by the *all things* here mentioned; secondly, who is intended by *God*, who is said to build them all.

§2. 1. (*Τα πάντα*) *all things*, is put for (*ταυτα πάντα*) *all these things*; all the things treated of; which kind of expression is frequent in the scripture. And therefore Beza well renders the words (*hæc omnia*) "all these things." The whole house and all the persons that belong to it, or the parts of it, in all ages. And thus is (*τα πάντα*) "all things" constantly restrained to the subject matter treated of. Besides the word (*κατασκευασας*) "he who hath built," here used by the apostle, whereby he expressed before the building of the house, plainly declares that it is the same kind of building he yet treats of, and not the absolute creation of all things, which is no where expressed by that word. And this is sufficient to evince what we plead for, viz. it is no where used to express the creation of all things, nor doth it signify to create, but to prepare, and to build; and it is often used in this business of preparing the church or the ways of Divine worship, see Matt. xi, 10; Luke i, 17; chap. vii, 21; Heb. ix, 2—6. Again, the making of all things, or the first creation, doth not belong to his purpose; but the mention of it would disturb the

series of his discourse, and render it equivocal. There is neither reason for it in his design, nor place for it in his discourse, nor any thing in it to his purpose.

§3. 2. Who is here intended by the name "God?" He that built all things is God. The words may be so understood, as to signify either that God made or built all these things, or, that he who made and built all these things, is God. The first sense, making God the subject, the latter, the predicate of the proposition. But as to our purpose they amount to the same thing; for if he who made them is God, his making of them declares him to be so. And that it is the Lord Christ who is intended in this expression will appear immediately; for,

(1.) If God absolutely, or God the Father be intended, then by the building of all things, the creation of the world is designed; so they all grant who are of that opinion; but that this is not so we have already demonstrated from the words themselves.

(2.) The introduction of God absolutely, and his building of all things in this place, is no way subservient to the apostle's purpose; for what light or evidence doth this contribute to his principal assertion? namely, that Christ was more honorable than Moses, and that on account of his building the house of God, the confirmation whereof he doth in these words expressly design?

(3.) It is contrary to his purpose. For he doth not prove the Lord Christ to be deservedly preferred before Moses, unless he manifest that by his own power he built the house of God in such a manner, as Moses was not employed in; whereas according to this interpretation, he assigns the principal building of the house to another, even the Father, and so overthrows what he had before asserted. This then is that,

which by these words the apostle intends to declare; namely, the ground and reason whence it is that the house was or could be in that glorious manner built by Christ, even because he is God, and so able to effect it; and by this effect of his power he is manifested so to be.

§4. The apostle, in the remaining part of the words, proceedeth to another argument to the same purpose with the former, consisting of a comparison between Christ and Moses, in reference to their relation to the house of God when built. In the building they were both faithful, Christ as the chief builder, Moses as a principal part of the house, ministerially also employed in the building of it. The house being built they are both faithful towards it, in their several relations to it; Moses as a servant in the house of God, Christ as a son over his own house; his own because he built it.

Let us consider these relations respectively.

1. The relation of Moses to the house of God. "Moses verily was faithful as a servant in his whole house;" (θεραπειων) a *servant*, minister, or officer (*in sacris*) in things belonging to religious worship. This was his place, this his dignity and honor; and it was amplified by the considerations, that he was faithful in his service, that he was a servant in the house of God, and particularly, that he was not thus employed, and thus faithful in this or that part, in this or that service of God's house, but in his whole house and all the concernments of it. Herein was he different from all others in the same service under the Old Testament; one was employed in one part of it, another in another, one to instruct another to reform it, one to renew a neglected ordinance, another to give new instructions; none but he was used in the service of the

“whole house.” And these things greatly speak his honor and glory; although as we shall see, they leave him incomparably inferior to the Lord Messiah.

“For a testimony of these things which should be spoken after.” The end of the service and ministry of Moses is expressed in these words. It was to be (*εις μαρτυριαν*) “for a testimony.” The word and ordinances of God are often called his “testimony;” that whereby he testifieth and witnesseth his will and pleasure to the sons of men. This testimony refers to the whole faithfulness of Moses, which was not confined or restrained to the things that were spoken, but extended itself to the whole service of the house wherein he was employed, as well in the building of the tabernacle, and institutions of ordinances, as revealing the will of God in his own law.

(*Δαλιθησομενων*) “Of things which should be spoken after,” respects things future to what he did in his whole ministry, as our translation rightly observes, and this as well the order of the words, as the proper import requires. He gave testimony to what? To “the things that were afterwards to be spoken,” in the fullness of time by the Messiah; that is, the things of the gospel. And this indeed was the proper end of all that Moses did or ordered in the house of God. Here the apostle takes his leave of Moses, and therefore gives him as it were, an *honorable burial*; and puts this glorious epitaph on his grave: *Moses a faithful servant of the Lord in his whole house.*

§5. 2. “But Christ as a son over his own house.” The term “faithful” is here to be repeated; was faithful as a son over his own house. Every word almost proves the pre-eminence asserted. He is a *son*, Moses a servant; he *over* the house, Moses in the house; he over his *own* house, Moses in the house of another.

The argument of the apostle in these words is obvious. The Son faithful over his own house, is more glorious and honorable than a servant that is faithful in the house of his Lord and Master. But Christ was thus a son over the house, Moses only a servant in it.

§6. "Whose house are we." Having confirmed his argument, the apostle returns, after his manner, to make application of it, and to improve it for the enforcement of his exhortation to constancy and perseverance. Now believers are the house of Christ upon a treble account.

1. On account of their persons, in them he dwells really by his Spirit. Hence they are said to be "living stones," and on him to be built into a "holy temple," 1 Pet. ii, 5; and as such does he dwell in them, Eph. ii, 20—22; 1 Cor. iii, 16; chap. vi, 19; John xiv, 17.

2. On account of their being compacted together in church order according to his institution; whereby they are built up, cemented, and become an house, like the tabernacle or temple of old, Eph. iv, 16; Col. ii, 19.

3. On account of their joint worship performed in that order, whereby he also dwells among them, or is present with them until the consummation of all things; Rev. xxi, 3; Matt. xxviii, 20.

§7. "If we hold fast," (*εστυ περ.*) These words may have a double sense; first to express the condition on which the truth of the former assertion depends; we are his house; but on this condition, that we hold fast, &c. Secondly, to express a description of the persons who are so the house of Christ, by a limitation and distinction among professors; shewing that in the former assertion he intends only those who hold fast their confidence firm to the end. Such conditional expressions of gospel comminations, although they have a

peculiar use and efficacy towards believers in the course of their obedience, as manifesting God's detestation of sin, and the certain connexion there is by God's eternal law between unbelief and punishment; yet, do not include any assertion that the persons of believers may at any time, all things considered, on the part of God as well as of themselves, actually fall under these penalties. The words, therefore, are descriptive of the persons who are the house of Christ, from a certain effect, or adjunct of that faith whereby they become to be so. They are such, and only such, as hold fast their confidence and glorying of hope, firm unto the end; whereby they are distinguished from temporary professors who may fall away.

§8. "If we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." Two things are observable in the words, what it is that the apostle requires in them that are in the house of Christ; namely, confidence and glorying in hope; and the manner of our retaining them, we must hold them fast and firm unto the end. Let us here consider,

1. What the apostle requires in these spiritual domestics, the confidence, and the glorifying of hope. The word (*παρρησία*) translated *confidence*, although it frequently occurs in the New Testament, yet is never used to signify that fiduciary trust in God which is an effect of faith, and wherein some have thought the nature of it to consist. For, unless where it is used adverbially to signify openly, plainly, notoriously, as it doth always in the gospel of John, see chap. xviii, 20, it constantly denotes liberty, and constancy of spirit in speaking or doing any thing towards God or man, which is the genuine and native signification of the word.

The *confidence* here intended refers to our “hope,” no less than the (*καυχημα*) *rejoicing* that followeth. The words are not rightly distinguished, when confidence is placed distinctly as one thing by itself, and rejoicing is only joined with hope. And this is evident from the construction of the words. For (*βεβαιων*) *firm*, agrees not immediately with (*ελπιδος*) *of hope*, which is of another case; nor with (*καυχημα*) *rejoicing*, which is of another gender; but with (*παρηρησιων*) *confidence* it agrees in both, and is regulated thereby; which it could not be, unless confidence were joined with hope also. “The confidence of hope;” not our hope itself, but the (*καυχημα*) *glorying* or rejoicing in it, is intended by the apostle; and therefore no more is our faith intended in the former expression. The meaning then is, “the confidence of hope, and the rejoicing of hope.”

§9. Now that hope which we have concerning a blessed immortality and glory by Jesus Christ, requires two things of us:

1. A free, bold, and open profession of that truth which our hope is built upon, and that against all dangers and oppositions; for we know that this hope will never make us ashamed, Rom. v, 5. This is the “confidence of hope” here mentioned; and this we are exhorted to elsewhere, 1 Pet. iii, 11, “Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you.” This (*ετοιμασια προς απολογισιν*) *promptitude* and alacrity in *apologizing*, avowing, defending, or pleading for the grounds of our hope, is the “confidence,” or rather liberty, or boldness of profession here intended.

2. An open opposing of our hope, or that which is hoped for, to all difficulties, dangers, and persecutions, with an holy boasting, glorying, or rejoicing in our lot and portion, because the foundation of our hope is sure,



and the things we hope for are precious and excellent in comparison of every thing that riseth against them.

§10. 2. The apostle next declares the manner how these things are to be secured; if we “hold fast our confidence firm unto the end.”

(1.) The duty itself relating to the manner of our retaining these things is to hold them fast; expressed by a word (*κατασχωμεν*) which signifies a careful, powerful holding of any thing, against opposition. The Greek phrase (*Κατεχειν το πληθος*) is “effectually to retain the multitude” in obedience, when in danger of sedition. And the following (*κατεχειν Φρουραις*) implies “to hold, retain, or keep a place with a guard.” Great care, diligence, and endeavors must be used in this matter, or we shall fail in it; because of the opposition and violence that will be used to wrest them from us. Unless we “hold them fast,” that is, retain them with care, diligence, and watchfulness, we shall lose them, or be forcibly deprived of them.

(2.) They are to be kept in a *firm* manner. The meaning of this word the apostle explaineth, chap. x, 23, “Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering;” that is, without declining from it, or being shaken in it. It is not enough that we keep and retain, yea, “hold fast” our profession; but we must keep it up against that fluctuating uncertainty of mind, which is apt to invade and possess unstable persons in the time of trial.

(3.) Herein must we continue to the end, that is, whilst we live; not for the present season only, but in all future occurrences, until we come to the end of our faith, the salvation of our souls.

§11. (II.) *Obs.* 1. The building of the church is so great and glorious a work, as that it could not be effected by any but by him who was God. This ob-

servation may be illustrated by considering the following particulars:

(1.) The wisdom of its contrivance: Nothing could effect it but infinite wisdom; yea the manifold wisdom of God was in it, Eph. iii, 10. All the treasures of his wisdom and knowledge, Col. ii, 3. In this eternal wisdom of God was the mysterious contrivance of this building hid from the foundation of the world, Eph. iii, 9; and its manifestation in the gospel was accompanied with so much glory, that the angels of heaven did earnestly desire to bow down and look into it. We may rather admire it than comprehend its excellency. But when we shall come to see, how the foundation of it was laid, at which all the sons of God shouted for joy; how by the strange and wonderful working of the Spirit of grace, all the stones designed from eternity for this building were made living ones in all ages and generations; and how they are from the foundation of the world to the end of it, fitly framed together to be a temple to the Lord; and what is the glory of God's inhabitation therein, we shall be satisfied that Divine wisdom was absolutely requisite.

2. The power employed in its erection. It is the effect of Divine power, whether we respect the opposition made to it, or the execution of the work itself. Those angels who left their first habitation, had drawn the whole creation into a conspiracy against the building of this house of God; not a person was to be used therein, but what was engaged in an enmity against the undertaking. And who shall prevail against the opposition? Nothing but Divine power could scatter the combination of principalities and powers, and defeat the incessant engagements of the world, and the gates of hell, against the design. Again, for the exe-

cution of the work itself, the sins of men were to be expiated, atonement for them was to be made, a price of redemption to be paid, dead sinners were to be quickened, blind eyes to be opened, persons of all sorts to be regenerated, ordinances and institutions of worship renounced for beauty and glory to be erected; supplies of the Spirit at all times and places for its increase in grace and holiness were to be granted, with other things innumerable, which nothing but Divine power could effect. Consider but this one thing; whereas all the parts of it are subject to dissolution, the persons of whom it consists all die, he that builds this house, must be able to raise them all from the dead, or else his whole work about the house itself is all lost. Now who can do this but he that is God? They who think this is the work of mere man, know nothing of it; indeed nothing of God, of themselves, or any reality of the gospel as they ought. It is but a little dark view I can take of the wisdom and power that is laid out in this work, and yet, I am not more satisfied that there is a God in heaven, than I am, that he that built this thing is God. And herein also may we see, whence it is that this building goes on, notwithstanding all the oppositions that are made to it. Take any one single believer from the foundation of the world, and consider the opposition that is made by sin, Satan, and the world, in temptations and persecutions, to his interest in the house of God; and doth it not appear marvellous that he is preserved, that he is delivered? How hath it been in this matter with our own souls, if we belong to this house? That we should be called out of darkness into marvellous light; that we should be preserved hitherto notwithstanding our weakness, faintness, manifold infirmities and sins? Is there not some sacred, hidden power, that effectually, in ways un-

known to us, puts forth itself in our behalf? Consider the whole church, with all the individual persons belonging thereunto throughout all generations; and think what it requires for its preservation in its inward and outward condition; does not Divine power shine forth in all these things? Not one stone of this building is lost or cast to the ground, much less shall ever the whole fabric be prevailed against.

§12. *Obs. 2.* The greatest and most honorable of the sons of men that are employed in the work of God in his house are but servants and parts of the house itself; "Moses verily as a servant." So did the principal builders of the church under the New Testament declare concerning themselves. "Servants of Jesus Christ," was their only title of honor. And they professed themselves to be servants of the churches, as being only "helpers of their joy," 1 Cor. i, 24. Not as lords over God's heritage, but as "ensamples to the flock," 1 Pet. v, 1; all according to the charge laid upon them by their Lord and Master, Matt. xx, 25—27; and this appears,

(1.) Because no man hath any thing to do in this house but by virtue of commission from him, who is the only Lord and ruler of it; this bespeaks them servants. They are all taken up in the market place, from amongst the number of common men, by the Lord of the vineyard, and sent into it by him. Neither are they sent to rest or sleep there, nor to eat the grapes and fill themselves; much less to tread down and spoil the vines; but to work and labor until the evening, when they shall receive their wages. All things plainly prove them to be "servants," Matt. xxviii, 18—20.

(2.) It is required of them as servants to observe and obey the commands of the Lord. It is required

of them that they be "faithful;" and their faithfulness consists in their dispensation of the mysteries of Christ, 1 Cor. iv, 1, 2. Moses himself, who received such a testimony to his faithfulness from God, did nothing but according to the pattern shewn him in the mount. This is the duty of a faithful servant, and not to pretend his own power and authority to ordain things in the house for its worship and sacred use, not appointed by his Lord and Master. There is a strange fascination in this matter, or men could not at the same time profess themselves servants, and yet not think that their whole duty consists in doing the will of their Lord, but also in giving out commands of their own to be observed. This is the work of lords, and not of servants; and if it be not forbid them by Christ, I know not what is.

(3.) As servants they are *accountable*. They must give an account of all they do in the house of their Lord. This their Master often warns them of; See Matt. xxiv, 45—48; Luke xii, 42. An account he will have of their talents, and of the souls committed to their charge; an account of their labor, diligence, and readiness to do or suffer according to his mind and will, Heb. xii, 14. It is to be feared that this is not much in some men's thoughts, who yet are greatly concerned in it. They count their profits, preferences, and wealth; but of the account they are to make at the last day, they seem to make no great reckoning. But what do such men think? Are they lords or servants? Have they a master or have they not? Are they to do their own will or the will of another? Do they fight uncertainly and beat the air, or have they some certain scope or aim before them? If they have, what can it be, but how they may give up their account with joy? Joy, if not in the safety of

all their flocks, yet in their own faithfulness, and the testimony of their consciences.

(4.) As servants they shall have their reward, every one his penny, what he hath labored for. For although they are but servants, yet they serve a good, just, great, and gracious Lord, who will not forget their labor, but give them a crown at his appearance, 1 Pet. v, 4.

See hence the boldness of the man of sin, and his accomplices, whose description we have exactly, Matt. xxiv, 48, 49, "An evil servant who says in his heart that his Lord delayeth his coming, and so smites his fellow servants, and eats and drinks with the drunken." He pretends, indeed, to be a servant of servants, but under that specious title, and shew of voluntary humility, takes upon him to be an absolute lord over the house of God. Others also would do well to ponder the account they are to make; and well is it with those, happy is their condition, whose greatest joy in this world is, on solid grounds, that they are accountable servants.

§13. *Obs. 3.* The great end of Mosaical institutions was to prefigure and give testimony to the grace of the gospel by Jesus Christ. To this end was Moses faithful in the house of God, and the demonstration of this principle is the main scope of our epistle, so far as it is doctrinal; and the particular consideration of it will occur to us in a more convenient place.

§14. *Obs. 4.* It is an eminent privilege to be a part of the house of Christ. "Whose house are we." This the apostle justly supposes, and reminds the Hebrews of, that a sense of so great a privilege might prevail with them in favor of the duties he had before urged. And it is an eminent privilege.

(1.) Because this house is God's building, 1 Cor. iii, 9; an house that he built, and that in an admirable manner. The tabernacle of old was thus far of God's building, that it was built by his appointment, and according to the pattern he gave of it to Moses. But this building is far more glorious; chap. ix, 11, "a great and perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building." Again, it is of "God's building," that none is employed in a way of authority for the carrying of it on, but the Lord Christ alone; the Son and Lord over his own house. And he takes it upon himself, Matt. xvi, 18, "I will build my church." This house whereof we speak excelleth, on many accounts, the whole fabric of heaven and earth; for it is a sacred temple: "Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together growing into an holy temple in the Lord," Ephes. ii, 20, 21. This is Jehovah's mansion; when all other things of the world are let out to farm to the sons of men, as cottages for flesh and blood to dwell in, this is God's place of constant and special residence.

(2.) It is a spiritual house, 1 Pet. ii, 5, made up of living stones in a strange and wonderful manner. A temple not subject to decay, but such as grows continually, as to every stone in particular that is laid in it, and in the daily accumulation of new ones. And although some are continually removed from the lower rooms in grace, to the higher apartments in glory, yet not one stone of it shall be lost.

(3.) The manner of God's habitation in this house is peculiar also. He dwelt indeed in the tabernacle and temple of old; but how? By sacrifices, carnal ordinances, and some outward appearances of glory.

In this house he dwells by his Spirit: "Ye are builded together an habitation of God through the Spirit," Ephes. ii, 22. And "know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" 1 Cor. iii, 16. Unspeakable therefore is the privilege, and the consequent advantages!

§15. *Obs.* 5. The greatness of this privilege requires an answerableness of duty. Because we are this house of God, it becometh us to hold fast our confidence to the end. It is incumbent on us to cultivate universal holiness, special purity of soul and body, becoming an habitation of the holy Spirit. How should we endeavor to fill up the place we occupy, and relation we sustain in this house, for the good of the whole.

§16. *Obs.* 6. In times of trial and persecution, freedom, boldness, and constancy in profession, are a good evidence to ourselves that we are living stones in the house of God. Hold fast, saith the apostle, your liberal profession of the gospel, and your exultation in the hope of the great promises it contains. This duty God hath set a singular mark upon, as what he indispensably requireth, and that whereby he is peculiarly glorified. A blessed instance we have hereof in the three companions of Daniel. They beheld, on one side, (*vultum instantis tyranni*) a threatening tyrant, the form of whose visage was changed with fury; on the other, a "flaming fiery furnace," into which they were instantly to be cast, if they let not go their profession. But behold their (*παρρησίαν*) boldness and confidence in their profession, Dan. iii, 16—18. They answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter, if it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto



thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." They do not ask a moment's space to deliberate in this matter; and a blessed end they had of their confidence. So Basil answered Julian when he would have given him space to consult; "Do, says he, what you intend, for I shall be the same to-morrow as I am to-day." So it is observed of Peter and John, Acts iv, 13. The Jews were astonished, observing their (*παρρησιαν*) "confidence," the word in the text which we there translate boldness, that is, their readiness and promptitude of mind and speech in their confession of the name of Christ, when they were in prison, and under the power of their adversaries. Hence all they that fail in this duty are termed (*δειλοι*) *fearful ones*, and are in the first rank of them who are excluded out of the new Jerusalem, Rev. xxi, 8.

§17. *Obs.* 7. Interest in the gospel gives sufficient cause of confidence and rejoicing in every condition. "Hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of your hope." The riches of it are invaluable, eternal, peculiar; such as out balance all earthly things, satisfactory to the soul, and terminating in endless glory; and he that is duly interested in them, cannot but have abundant cause of joy unspeakable at all times.

§18. *Obs.* 8. So many and great are the inconveniences, hinderances, and temptations that lie in the way of our profession, so great is the number of them that decay in it, or apostatize from it, that the principal discovery of its truth and sincerity is to be taken from its permanency. Whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence, the profession, and the rejoicing of our hope, firm unto the end.

## VERSES 7—11.

*Wherefore, (as the Holy Ghost saith, to-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, they do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I swear in my wrath, they shall not enter into my rest.)*

§1 Introduction. §2. 2—11. (I.) The several clauses of the words explained. §12—22. (II.) Observations §23--26, Special seasons of grace and obedience are in an especial manner to be observed and improved. §27--32. Other observations. §33--35. There is commonly a time when unbelief riseth to its height of provocation. §36--51. Remaining observations.

§1. **H**AVING demonstrated the pre-eminence of Christ before Moses in their respective ministries, the apostle, according to his design and usual method, proceeds to the application of the truth he had evinced, in an exhortation to stability and constancy in faith and obedience. And this he doth in a way that adds double force to his exhortation; in that he first presseth them with the words, testimonies, and examples recorded in the Old Testament, to which they professed a special deference and subjection; and then the nature of the example which he insists upon is such, as supplies him with a new argument for his purpose. Now this is taken from the dealing of God with them, who were disobedient under the ministry and rule of Moses; which he farther explains, verse 15—19. For if God dealt in severity with them, who were unbelieving and disobedient, with respect to him who was but a servant in the house; they might easily understand what his displeasure towards us would be, who should behave so with respect to the Son and his work, who is Lord over the whole house, and whose house we are. Let us,

I. Attend to the exposition of the words in their several parts, and then,

II. We shall deduce such observations as appear most profitable and important.

§2. (I.) “Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day,” &c. (*Διο*) *Wherefore*, expresseth an inference from what was spoken before, manifesting the ensuing exhortation to be deduced from it, which exhortation itself the apostle directly enters upon, ver. 12. There is therefore, an hyperbaton, or transposition, in the discourse; the words that agree in sense being separated by an interposing digression (contained in a parenthesis) for the better enforcement of the exhortation itself. “As the Holy Ghost saith,” or, that I may respect the words of the Holy Ghost. There is an emphasis in the manner of expression, (*το πνευμα το αγιον*) “That holy Spirit,” so called (*κατ’ εξοχην*) by way of eminency; the third person in the trinity, who in an especial manner spake in the penmen of the sacred scriptures, 2 Pet. i, 21. As he saith; this may intend either his first immediate speaking in his inspiration of the psalmist, as expressed chap. iv, 7, (*λεγων εν Δαβιδ*) “saying in David,” where these words are again repeated; or, his continuing still to speak those words to us all, in the Divine records; for being given out by his inspiration, and his authority always accompanying them, he still speaketh them. The words are taken from Ps m xcv, 7—11. He mentions not the place, as speaking to those who either were, or were supposed to be exercised in the word. The leaving therefore of an uncertainty, whence particular quotations are taken, is useful to make us more sedulous in our inquiries. A certain day or space of time is limited or determined, as the apostle speaks in the next chapter; limited, because a day; present, became to-day. And this space may denote in general the continuance of men’s lives in this world; but yet, this depending on the Divine

pleasure, it is God's day that is intended, not ours, which we may outlive, and lose the benefit of, as will afterwards appear; verse 13, "exhort one another daily, whilst it is called ( $\square\text{וי} \eta \sigma\eta\mu\epsilon\rho\upsilon\nu$ ) *to-day*;" that is, whilst the season of the duty is continued to you. So was it also originally used by the psalmist, and applied to the duties of the feast of tabernacles, or some other season of the performance of God's solemn worship.

§3. "If ye will hear his voice;" ( $\epsilon\alpha\nu$ ) *if*, a mere conditional term, as commonly used; ( $\tau\eta\varsigma \Phi\omega\nu\eta\varsigma \alpha\nu\tau\epsilon \alpha\nu\theta\sigma\alpha\lambda\epsilon$ ) "Ye will hear his voice;" the effectual doing of the thing spoken of is intended. So Numb. xiv, 22, "They have tempted me these ten times, and have not heard my voice;" that is, have not yielded obedience to my command. It is frequently observed, that "to hear" or "to hearken," signifies in scripture, to "obey," or to yield obedience to the things heard; as, "to see," doth "to understand," or believe; and to "taste" denotes "spiritual experience." Words of sense being used to express the spiritual acts of the mind. His voice; the "voice" of the Lord is sometimes taken for his "power;" inasmuch as by his word, as an intimation and signification of the power which he puts forth therein, he created and disposeth of all things. See Psalm xxix, 3—9, where the mighty works of God's power and providence are assigned to his voice. See also Mic. vi, 9. Sometimes it is used for the revelation of his will in his commands and promises; but it is withal certain that the Hebrew and Greek words ( $\text{קול}$  and  $\Phi\omega\nu\eta$ ) are used principally if not solely for a sudden transient voice or speaking. Wherefore the psalmist in these words, as to their historical and typical intendment, recalls the people to the remembrance and consideration of God's speaking to them in the giving of the law at Horeb; and exhorts them to obe-

dience, from the solemn circumstance that the will of God was uttered to them in a marvellous manner. And as to their prophetic design, he intimates another extraordinary revelation of the Divine will to be made by the Messiah.

§4. “Harden not your hearts as in the provocation,” (Μη σκληρυναίτε τας καρδιας υμων) *harden not your hearts*; this expression occurs not in other writers, and therefore may be termed sacred. To “harden the heart” has a peculiar reference to the obedience which God requires of us. The single term (σκληροτης) *hardness*, is indeed sometimes used in heathen writers for stubbornness of mind and manners; but the verb (σκληρυνω) *to harden*, is scarcely ever used except in the Septuagint and the New Testament, Acts xix, 9; Rom. ix, 18, and in each of the latter only by Paul. Therefore, to “harden the heart,” in a moral sense, is peculiar to holy writ, and, with respect to the New Testament, peculiar to Paul; and it ever denotes a voluntary perverseness of mind, in not taking notice of, or not applying the soul to the revealed will of God, in order to do and observe it.

(Ως εν τω παραπιρασμω) “As in the provocation.” The simple term (πιικρος) from which the compound is derived, signifies properly, *bitter*, in opposition to another, (γλυκυσ) signifying *sweet*, pleasant. So also these two verbs (πιικρω and πιικραινω) signify *to make bitter* to the taste or sense: but their metaphorical use in a moral sense is frequent for *exacerbo provoco*. The story which this principally refers to is recorded Exod. xvii, 2—7; and another story to the like purpose we have, of what befell the people in the wilderness of sin near forty years afterwards, when, in their murmuring for water, another rock was smitten to bring it forth; on which is added, “This is the water of Merihah, be-

cause the children of Israel strove with the Lord," Numb. xx, 13. It is also said on the same occasion, that "the people did chide with Moses," ver. 2.

§5. "As in the day (τῆς πειρασμοῦ) of temptation in the wilderness;" the other name given to the place before mentioned in Exodus, from thence it seems the apostle takes his example, where both the names are mentioned; and where the place is said to be called Meriba and Massa, Exod. xvii, 7; whereas in that of Numbers, chap. xx, 13, it is only said, "This is the water of Meviba," or *strife*; and yet it may not be without respect to the latter also. The first instance was at the beginning, the latter at the close of their provocation: as they began, so they ended. "And Moses said unto the people, why do you chide with me; and why do you tempt the Lord?" This matter, as a thing exceedingly remarkable, is often called over in scripture, sometimes to reproach the people and to burden them with their sins, Deut. ix, 22, "And at Massa ye tempted the Lord to wrath;" and sometimes to warn them of the like miscarriages; chap. vi, 16, "You shall not tempt the Lord your God as you tempted him at Massa." So also in the xcvi<sup>th</sup> Psalm, from whence the apostle takes these words; "In the wilderness," or desert of Midian, whereinto that people entered upon their coming through the Red Sea. In their way towards Horeb, their fourth station was at Rephidim, where the above things happened, and where they received refreshment in a type, the spiritual rock, some days before the giving of the fiery law.

§6. "Where your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works." Your fathers; the whole congregation in the wilderness, whose posterity they were, (εδοκιμασαν με) *proved me*; this word is seldom used in an ill sense, as the former (επειρασαν) is almost con-

tinually, and signifies *to have experience* upon search, investigation, and trial. In Psalm cxxxix, 2, 3, the experience which they had of the power of God is intended; "They proved me," and found by trial that I was in the midst of them. *And saw my works*; The original particle (וְ) in the psalm, signifies *moreover*, somewhat above a mere conjunction; and some suppose it may be here taken for (*etsi, etiamsi,*) *although*. They tempted me, proved me, "although" they saw my works. And so these words are placed as an aggravation of their sin in tempting and distrusting him after such experience of his power and goodness in those mighty works they saw. For generally all the works of God in the wilderness, whether of mercy or judgment, were consequents of the people's tempting him.

§7. "They saw my work forty years." The psalmist placeth these words at the beginning of the next verse, and makes them to respect the season of God's indignation against them for their sins; "forty years was I grieved;" but by the apostle, the space of time mentioned is applied to the people's seeing the works of God. But these things being absolutely commensurate in their duration, it is altogether indifferent to which of them the limitations of time specified is formally applied. Every year in the whole forty was full of sins, provocation, temptations, and unbelief; and every year was also filled with tokens of God's displeasure and indignation; until the close of the whole dispensation came, wherein that generation, which came out of Egypt under Moses, was consumed; and the indignation of God rested in that consumption. And it is not unlikely but that the apostle reminds the Hebrews of this space of time granted to their forefathers in the wilderness after their coming out of

Egypt, with their abuse of it, because a like space of time was now in the patience of God allotted to the whole Jewish church and people, between the preaching of Christ and that wasting destruction that was now approaching: and which accordingly took place. For as, after their forefathers, who came up under Moses out of Egypt, were consumed in forty years in the wilderness, a new generation under the conduct of Joshua entered into the rest of God; so, within forty years after the preaching of spiritual deliverance was rejected by them that whole generation was cut off in wrath, and a new church of Jews and Gentiles, under the conduct of the true Joshua, enters into the rest of God.

§8. "Wherefore I was grieved with that generation (*διο προσωχθισα*) *Wherefore I was grieved*; the apostle here alters the tenor of the discourse in the psalmist, by interposing a reference to the cause of God's being grieved with the people, in the word (*διο*) *wherefore*, that is, because of their manifold temptations and provocations being not cured, not healed, although for so long a season they beheld his works. The word (*προσωχθισα*) is generally thought to be derived from (*οχθη* or *οχθος*) "the bank of a river," a rising hill or bank by the water side. Thence is the verb (*οχθεω*) "to be offended," to bear a thing with difficulty; tediousness, and vexation, so as to rise up with indignation against it, like the ground that riseth against the waters. This word (*προσοχθιζω*) is the same with an addition of sense, "to be *greatly* grieved." And as the word "grieved" is ambiguous in our language, importing either (*dolore affici*) to be *affected with sorrow* and grief; or a being *wearied* accompanied with indignation; as we say, such or such a thing is "grievous;" that is, (*græce molestum*) "troublesome;" so is the



word here used, "*grieved*," that is, burdened, offended, provoked. The appointed time of God's patience was worn out with their continued provocations, so that he was wearied with them, and weary of them, he could bear them no longer, (τῆ γενεᾷ ἐκείνῃ) "with that generation;" (דָּר) "a generation," is the age of man, or rather the men of one age, Eccl. i, 4, "One generation passeth away and another generation cometh;" that is, the men of one age. See Deut. xxxii, 1. The term "generation" here denotes no limited season, but compriseth all the persons that came up out of Egypt above twenty years of age, who all died within the space of forty years afterwards.

§9. (Αεὶ πλανῶνται τῆ καρδίᾳ) "They always err in heart;" always, on all occasions, in every trial; not in one condition did they give glory to God: neither in their straits nor in their deliverances; neither in their wants nor in their fulness; but continually tempted and provoked him with their murmurings and unbelief. The word then denotes not a speculative error of the mind, a mistake or misapprehension of what was proposed to them, in which sense the term "error" and "erring" are most commonly used, but a practical aberration, or wandering by choice from the way of obedience made known to them, and therefore are they said to err "in their heart." For though that be commonly taken in scripture for the entire principle of moral operations, and so compriseth the mind and understanding; yet when an immediate respect is had to duties and sins, it hath an especial regard to the affections and desires of the soul: so that "to err in heart" is, through the seductions and impulses of corrupt affections, to have the mind and judgment corrupted, and then to depart from the ways of obedience.

§10. (ΑΥΤΟΙ ΔΕ ΟΚ ΕΓΝΩΣΑΝ ΤΙΣ ΟΔΟΣ ΜΕ,) “And they have not known my ways.” The apostle renders the Hebrew particle (ו) by (δε) “And,” as in our translation; yet an opposition may also be intimated, *but* they have not known. It is said before, they saw the works of God, which were part of his ways; and his laws were made known to them. Of these two parts do his “ways” consist; the ways of his providence, and the ways of his commands; or the ways wherein he walketh towards us, and the ways wherein he would have us walk towards him. And yet it is said of this people, that they knew not his ways. As we said before concerning their “error;” so we must now say concerning their “ignorance;” that it is not a simple nescience that is intended, but rather an effectual dislike of what they saw and knew. They did not spiritually and practically know the mind and intention of God which is required in the law, and promised in the covenant. In that light and knowledge which they had of the ways of God, they liked them not, they delighted not in them. And this is the constant intention of that word “to know,” where the object of it is God, his ways, or his will.

§11. “So I swear in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest.” God is said to “swear in his *wrath*,” because he declared the purpose of it under a particular provocation. The whole matter is recorded Numb. xiv, 21—23; ver. 25—28. Why should they now stay any longer in that wilderness, which was neither meet to entertain them, nor designed for their habitation? Wherefore, to prepare a way for their entrance into Canaan, spies are sent by God’s direction, with excellent instructions to search out the land, Numb. xiii, 17—20. Upon their return, the peevish, cowardly, unbelieving multitude, terrified with a false

report they made, fall into an outrageous repining against God, and sedition against their ruler. Hereupon the Lord, wearied as it were with their continued provocations, and especially displeased with this last instance, whereby as far as in them lay, they had frustrated his intentions towards them; threatened to consume the people as one man, ver. 12. But Moses fixing on the noblest topic, earnestly pleading the interest of Jehovah's glorious name, prevailed to divert the execution of that threatening. And yet so great was this provocation, and so absolutely had the people of that generation discovered themselves every way unfit to follow the Lord in that great work; that to shew the greatness of their sin, and the irrevocableness of his purpose, he "sware with great indignation" against their entering into his rest."

(Εἰ εἰσελευσόνται) *If they shall enter*; the expression relates to the *oath* of God, wherein he swear by himself; as if he had said, "Let me not live," or "let me not be God," if ye enter; which is the greatest and highest asseveration that they should not enter. And the suppression of the full sentence is not, as some suppose, from an abruptness of speech, but from reverence; and the expression is absolutely negative. (Εἰς τὴν κληπαυσίμην) *into my rest*; the pronoun "my" is taken either efficiently or subjectively. If the former, the rest that God would give this people is intended; they shall not enter into the land I promised to give to Abraham and his seed, as a state of rest, after all their peregrinations. Or it may be expounded subjunctively, for the rest of God himself, that is, the place, wherein he would fix his worship and therein rest. And this seems to be the proper meaning of the word "my rest," that is, the place where I will rest, by establishing my worship therein. Hence this

was the solemn word of blessing at the moving of the ark of God. "Arise, O Lord, into thy rest;" see Psalm cxxxii, 3; 2 Chron. vi, 41. "A place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob," Psalm cxxxii, 5. So he calls his worship "his rest," and the place of his rest, Isa. xi, 10, and lxvi, 1.

§12. (II.) From the words thus particularly insisted on, the following observations may be made:

*Obs.* 1. No Divine truth when delivered should be passed by without manifesting its use, and endeavoring its improvement for promoting holiness and obedience. So soon as the apostle had evinced his proposition concerning the excellency of Christ in his prophetic office, he turns himself to the application of it. Divine knowledge is like a practical science, the end of all the principles and theorems of which is their practice; take that away, and it is of no use. It is our wisdom and understanding to know how to live to God; to that purpose are all the principles, truths, and doctrines of religion to be improved. If this be not done in the teaching and hearing of it, we fight uncertainly, as men beating the air.

§13. *Obs.* 2. In times of temptations and trials, arguments and exhortations to watchfulness against sin, and to constancy in obedience, are to be multiplied in number, and pressed with wisdom, earnestness, and diligence. Such was the season now with these Hebrews. They were exposed to great trials and temptations. Seduction on the one hand by false teachers, and persecution on the other hand by wrathful adversaries, closely beset them. The apostle therefore adds one argument to another, and pursues them all with pathetic exhortations. He understood their temptations and saw their dangers, and with what wisdom, variety of arguments, expostulations, exhortations, and

awakening reproofs, doth he deal with them? What care, tenderness, compassion, and love appear in them all? In nothing did the excellency of Spirit more evidence itself than in his holy jealousy, and tender care for persons in such a condition. And herein Christ set him forth for an example to all those to whom the dispensation of the gospel should afterwards be committed; in this care and watchfulness lies the very life and soul of their ministry. Where this is wanting, whatever else be done, there is but the carcase or shadow of it. This then is of excellent use, provided,

(1.) That the argument be solid and firm, that our foundation fail us not in our work. Earnest exhortations on feeble principles have more of noise than weight. When there is an aim of reaching men's affections, without possessing their minds with due reasons of the things treated of, it deservedly proves most evanid.

(2.) That the exhortations itself be grave and weighty. Duty ought to be clothed with words of wisdom, such as may not by their weakness, unfitness, and uncomliness, expose the matter to contempt or scorn. Hence the apostle requires a singular ability for the duty of admonition, Rom. xv, 14; "Filled with all knowledge, and able to admonish one another."

(3.) That the love, care, and compassion of those who give such exhortations and admonitions be made to appear. Prejudices are the bane and ruin of mutual warnings; and these nothing can remove but a demonstration of love, tenderness, and compassion. Morose, peevish, wrathful admonitions, as they bring guilt upon the admonisher, so they seldom free the admonished from any.

§14. *Obs. 3.* Exhortations to duty ought to be resolved into an authority which may influence the conscience. Without this they will be weak and ridiculously nerveless; especially if the duties exhorted to be difficult, burdensome, or any way grievous. Authority is the formal reason of duty; when God gave out his law of commandments, he prefaced it with a signification of his sovereign authority over the people; "I am the Lord thy God." And it is our duty in giving our exhortations and commands from him, to manifest his authority in them. "Teach men," saith our Savior, "to do and observe whatsoever I have commanded you," Matt. xxviii, 20. His commands are to be proposed, and his authority in them to be applied to their souls and consciences. To exhort men in the things of God, and to say, this or that man saith so, be he the pope or who he will, is of no use or efficacy. That which we are to attend to, is what the Holy Ghost saith, from whose authority there is no appeal.

§15. *Obs. 4.* Whatever was given by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and is recorded in scripture for the use of the church, he continues therein to speak it to us, unto this day. As he lives for ever, so he continues to speak for ever; that is, whilst his voice or word shall be of established use to the church. "As the Holy Ghost saith," that is, speaks now to us; and where doth he speak it? In the ninety-fifth Psalm. Many men have invented several ways to lessen the authority of the scripture; and few are willing to acknowledge an immediate speaking of God to them therein. Various pretences are used to subduct the consciences of men from a sense of his authority in it. But whatever authority, efficacy, or power, the word of God was accompanied with, whether to evidence

itself to be divine, or otherwise to affect the minds of men to obedience, when it was first spoken by the Holy Ghost, the same it retains now it is recorded in scripture, seeing the same Divine Spirit yet continues to speak therein. The psalmist speaks to the people, as if the voice of God was then sounding in their ears. It being not only materially his revealed will and command, but also accompanied with that special impression of his authority, with which it was at first attested. And on this ground (the sacredness of the means by which they are transferred) all the miracles wherewith the word of old was confirmed, are of the same validity and efficacy towards us, as they were towards those who saw them.

§16. *Obs. 5.* The formal reason of all our obedience consists in its relation to the voice or authority of God. If we do the things that are commanded, but not with respect to the authority of God by whom they are commanded, what we so do is not obedience properly so called. It hath the matter of obedience, but the formal reason, which is the life and soul of obedience, it hath not: what is so done is but (allow the expression) the carcase of duty, no way acceptable to God. In all our concerns with him, God is to be regarded as our sovereign Lord and only law-giver. By this, therefore, let our souls be influenced to duty in general, and to every special duty in particular. Let this be the reason we render to ourselves and others, of all our obedience. If it be asked, why we do such or such a thing? We answer, because we must obey the voice of the Lord our God. And many advantages we have by a constant attendance to this authority, for this will keep us to the proper rule and compass of duty, and will not suffer us to omit any thing that God requires of us; it will strengthen

and fortify the soul against all dangers, difficulties, and temptations that oppose it in the way of obedience; and it will not be (*territa monstris*) frightened or deterred by any thing that lies in its way, it will have a readiness wherewith to answer all objections, and oppose all contradictions.

§17. *Obs. 6.* Every thing in the commands of God, relating to the manner of their promulgation is to be retained in our minds, and considered as present to us. The psalmist “after so long a season,” as the apostle speaks, calls the people to hear the voice of God, as it sounded on mount Sinai at the giving of the law. Not only the law itself, and the authority of God therein, but the manner also of its delivery by the great and terrible voice of God is to be regarded, as if God did still continue so to speak to us: so also is it in respect to the gospel. In the first revelation of it, God spake immediately “in the Son,” and a reverence for that speaking we should continually maintain. He continues yet to speak from heaven, Heb. xii, 25. The gospel is his voice and word now, no less than it was when in person he spake on earth. And God being thus both in his commands and the manner of their promulgation, rendered present to us by faith, is a great incitement to obedience.

§18. *Obs. 7.* Consideration and choice are a stable and permanent foundation of obedience. The command of God is here proposed to the people’s understanding, that they may consider it; to their will, that they may choose and embrace it: “If you will hear his voice.” Consider this matter thoroughly, whose command it is, in what manner given, what is the matter of it, and what are its ends. Men that are engaged in a course of profession or obedience, as it were by



chance or custom, will leave it by chance, or as the custom changes, at any time. Those who are compelled to it by some pungent galling convictions, so that they yield obedience, not because they like or choose it, but because they dare not do otherwise, will soon lose all respects to it, as the force of their convictions wear off. But a deliberate choice of the ways of God, upon a due consideration of all their concernments, powerfully fixeth the soul to obedience. And it is the most eminent effect of the grace of Christ, to make his people willing in the day of his power.

§19. *Obs.* 8. Such is the nature, efficacy, and power of the voice and word of God, that men cannot withstand it without a sinful hardening of themselves. It is the choice instrument, which God useth to remove our sinful hardness. It is not of itself, I confess, absolutely considered, without the operation of the Spirit of grace, able to produce this effect. But it is able to do it in its own kind and place; and is thence said to be “able to save our souls,” Jam. i, 21, and “able to build us up, and give us an inheritance amongst them that are sanctified,” Acts xx, 32; being also that immortal seed whereby we are begotten unto God, 1 Pet. i, 23. By this means doth God take away that natural blindness of men; opening their eyes and turning them from darkness to light, Acts xxvi, 18; shining into their hearts to give them the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ, 2 Cor. iv, 6; as also quickening them who were dead to trespasses and sins; and thereby removes that hardness which is a consequent of these things; and God doth not apply a means to any end which is unsuited to it, or insufficient for it. Every one therefore, to whom the word is duly revealed, and who is not converted to God, doth voluntarily and

obstinately oppose its operation. Here lies the great obstruction to the progress of the word in its efficacy upon the souls of men. If they will add new obstinacy and hardness to their minds and hearts, if they will fortify themselves against the word with prejudices and dislike, if they will resist its operation through their lusts and corrupt affections, God may justly leave them to perish, and to be filled with the fruit of their own ways. And this state of things is variously expressed in the scripture. As by God's willingness for the salvation of those to whom he grants his word, as the means of their conversion, Ezek. xviii, 23; chap. xiii, 2; 2 Pet. iii, 9; 1 Tim. ii, 4; by his expostulations with them who reject his word, casting all the blameable cause of their destruction upon themselves, Matt. xxiii, 34. Now as these things cannot denote a decretive intention in God for their conversion, so they express more than a mere proposal of the outward means which men are not able savingly to receive and improve. There is this also in them, that God gives such an efficacy to these means, as that their operation doth proceed on the minds and souls of men in their natural condition, until by some new acts of their will, they harden themselves against them. And so the gospel is proposed to the wills of men, Isa. lv, 1; Rev. xxii, 14. Hence it is, that the miscarriage of men under the dispensation of the word is still charged upon some *positive actings of their wills*, in opposition to it, Isa. xxx, 15; Matt. xxiii, 21; John iii, 19; chap. v, 40. They perish not, they defeat not the end of the word towards them, by a mere continuance in the state wherein the word finds them, but by rejecting the counsel of God made known to them for their healing and recovery, Luke vii, 30.

§20. *Obs.* 9. Many previous sins make way for the great sin of finally rejecting the voice of God. The not hearing the voice of God which is here reprov'd, is that which is final, and which absolutely cuts men off from entering into the rest of God. Men come not to this length without having their hearts hardened by deprav'd lusts and affections; hardening of the heart goes before final impenitency and infidelity, as the means and cause of it. Things do not ordinarily come to an immediate issue between God and the hearers of his word: I say ordinarily, because God may immediately cut off any person upon the first refus'd tender of the gospel, and it may be, he deals with so many; but ordinarily he exerciseth much patience towards men in this condition. He finds them in a state of nature, that is, of enmity against him. In this state he offers them terms of peace, and waits thereon during the season of his good pleasure, to see what the event will be. Many in the mean time attend to their lusts and temptations, and so contract an obdurate senselessness upon their hearts and minds, which fortifying them against the calls of God, prepares them for final impenitency.

§21. *Obs.* 10. Old Testament examples are New Testament instructions. Our apostle elsewhere reckoning sundry instances of what fell out among the people of old, affirms of them, Cor. x, 11, "All these things befell them as types." The Jews have a saying; "Whatever happeneth to the fathers, is a sign or an example to the children," with which agrees the Latin adage: *Discipulus est prioris posterior dies*. "The following day is to learn of the former." Experience is the greatest advantage for wisdom. But there is more in this matter; the will and appointment of God is in it. All the times of the Old Testament, and

what fell out in them, are instructive of the times and days of the New; not only the words, doctrines, and prophecies, but the actions, doings, and sufferings of the people are for the same purpose. They befell them, that God in them might represent to us, what we are to expect, if we transgress in like manner. They and their actions were our types. (*Τυπος*) a *type*, hath many significations; in this connexion it signifies a rude and imperfect expression of any thing, in order to a full, clear, and exact declaration of it.

Now these types and examples were of three sorts:

(1.) Such as were directly instituted and appointed for this end, That they should signify and represent something in particular in the Lord Jesus Christ and his kingdom. Their then present use did not comprehend their principal end. And herein do types and sacraments differ. The latter have no use but what respects their spiritual end and signification; (we do not baptize any to wash the body, nor give them the sacred supper to nourish it) but the former had their use in temporal things, as well as their signification of things spiritual. Now these types, which had a solemn, direct, stated institution, were either persons or things.

(2.) Such as had only a providential ordination to that purpose; things or actions that occasionally fell out, and so were not capable of a solemn institution; but were so guided by Divine Providence, as that they might prefigure some future event. Some of these have received an express particular application by the Holy Ghost in the New Testament; and the infallible application of the one to the other is not the least part of those teaching examples which are recorded in the Old Testament. They are all written for our sakes,

(3.) Such as are meet to illustrate present things, from a proportion of similitude between them. And thus where a place of scripture treats directly of one thing, it may in the interpretation of it be applied to illustrate another which hath some likeness to it.

§22. Now in these allegorical expositions or applications, sundry things are wisely and diligently to be considered. Such as, that there be a due proportion between the things compared, that there be a designed signification in them, and that the first original sense of the words be sacredly observed. I have added these things, because I find many very ready to allegorize upon the scripture without any due consideration of the analogy of faith, or the proportion of the things compared, or of the first genuine sense of the word they make use of. This is plainly to corrupt the word of God; and however they who make use of such perverted allusions of things, may please the fancies of some persons, they render both themselves and their services contemptible to the judicious. But, in general, all things in the Old Testament, both what was spoken and what was done, hath an especial reference to the Lord Jesus Christ and the gospel; and therefore in several ways we may receive instruction from them. As their institutions are our instructions more than theirs, and we see more of the mind of God in them than they did; so their mercies are our encouragement, and their punishments our examples. And this proceedeth from the way that God in infinite wisdom had allotted to the opening and unfolding of the mystery of his love, and the dispensation of the covenant of grace. The way whereby God was pleased to manifest the counsels of his will in this matter, was gradual, until the fulness of time came, and all things were completed in Christ. Moreover: this is part of that

privilege which God had reserved for that church which was to be erected immediately by his Son. God had "provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect," Heb. xi, 40. Neither themselves nor any thing that befell them, was perfect without us. It had not in them its full end, nor its full use, being ordained in the counsel of God for our benefit. This privilege did God reserve for the New Testament church, that as it should enjoy that perfect revelation of his will in Christ, which the Old Testament church received not: so what was then revealed had not its perfect end and use, until it was brought over to this also. See hence what use we are to make of the scriptures of the Old Testament. They are all ours with all their instructive contents. The sins of the people are recorded for our warning; their obedience for our example, and God's dealing with them on the account of the one and the other, for our direction and encouragement in believing. Consider also what is expected from us above them who believed under the Old Testament. Where much is given, much is required. Now we have not only the super-added helps of gospel light, but also whatever means or advantages they had are made over to us; yea, their very sins and punishment are our instruction. As God in his grace and wisdom hath granted us more light and advantage than he granted them, so in his righteousness he expects from us more fruits of holiness to his praise and glory.

§23. *Obs.* 11. Special seasons of grace and obedience are in an especial manner to be observed and improved. For this end are they given and made special, that they may be peculiarly improved. God doth nothing in vain; least of all in the things of grace, of the gospel, and of the kingdom of his Son.

When he gives a special day, it is for special work. "To-day if ye will hear his voice," such a day or season consists in a concurrence of sundry things:

(1.) In a peculiar dispensation of the means of grace: there are sometimes special effects of providence, of Divine wisdom and power, making way for it, bringing it in, or preserving it in the world. The "day" mentioned in the text was that which the people enjoyed in the wilderness, when the worship of God was first revealed to them and established amongst them; this made that time their special day and season. The like works for the like purpose at any time will constitute the like season. When God is pleased to make his arm bare in behalf of the gospel; when his power and wisdom are made conspicuous in various instances for its introduction into any place, or the continuance of its preaching against oppositions, then doth he give a "special day," or season to them who enjoy it.

Again: When there are *eminent communications* of the gifts of the Holy Ghost to those by whom the mysteries of the gospel are to be dispensed; and that either as to the increase of their number, or of their abilities, with readiness for, and diligence in their work. When God thus gives the word, "great is the army of them that publish it:" for the church in its work and order is (כָּנַר גְּלוּרֵת) "as bannered ones" that is, as bannered armies, "armies with banners," Cant. vi, 10. Such was the "day" that our apostle calls the Hebrews to consider. It was not long after the ascension of Christ, when the gifts of the Spirit were poured out upon the multitudes of all sorts, as was foretold, Acts ii, 18, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet: And it shall come to pass in the last days (saith God) I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and

your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants and on my handmaids I will pour out in those days of my Spirit and they shall prophesy." The extent of the communication of the Spirit at that season is emphatically expressed in those words, "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh." As the act of *pouring* denotes abundance, plenty, freedom, largeness; so the *object* "all flesh" signifies the extent of it to all sorts of persons. And when God is pleased to give, or "pour out" of the gifts of his Spirit upon many, for the declaration and preaching of the word of truth, then doth he constitute such a special day or season.

(2.) When God is pleased to give signal *providential warnings* to awaken and stir up men to consider or attend to his word and ordinances, such a season becomes a "special day." For the end of extraordinary providences is to prepare men for receiving the word, or to warn them of impending judgments for the contempt of it. This conspicuous mark did God put upon the season respected by the apostle in the passage before cited. For to the mention of the pouring of the Spirit, that of *signs* and *judgments* is adjoined, Acts ii, 19, 20, "And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs on the earth beneath, blood, and fire, and vapors of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and notable day of the Lord come." The things here spoken of, were those signs, prodigies, and judgment which God shewed the Jews before the destruction of Jerusalem, as foretold by our Lord, Matt. xxiv. And what was the end of them? It was evidently to put a signal mark upon the day and season of grace which was then granted that people. For so



it is added, ver. 21, "And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved;" that is, whosoever shall make use of these warnings by signs and wonders, shall be saved; when others that are negligent, rebellious, and disobedient, shall utterly perish.

(3.) When it is a season of the accomplishment of prophecies and promises for effecting some great work of God in the outward state of the church as to its worship. The "day" whereunto the application of these things is made by the apostle, was the season wherein God would make that great alteration in the whole worship of the church, by the last revelation of his mind and will "in the Son." This was a day great and signal. So also when the time comes of the fulfilling of any special prophecy or prediction for the reformation of the church, it constitutes such a season. Something of this nature seems to be expressed, Rev. xiv, 6—8, "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwelt on the earth, and to every nation and kindred and tongue and people; saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come: and there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." The time is approaching wherein Babylon is to be destroyed and the church to be redeemed from under her tyranny, as also to be freed from her pollution, and from drinking any more of the cup of her fornication, which is the greatest change or alteration that the outward state of it is capable of in the world. The everlasting gospel is to be preached with such glory, beauty, and efficacy, as if it were delivered from the midst of heaven; and hereby men

have an especial day of repentance given them. And thus it is also at sundry times, wherein the Lord deals with his churches in one place or another, by way of preparation to what shall follow in his appointed time amongst them all.

§24. It is declared in the observation, that such a day or season is to be diligently improved; and the reasons are,

1. Because God expects it. He expects that our applications to him in obedience should answer his to us in care and tenderness; that when he is earnest in his dealings with us, we should be diligent in our observance of him. Every circumstance he adds to his ordinary dispensations is weighty: and in such a day there are many, see Isa. v, 12, "My well-beloved hath a vineyard (בֵּקֶן בֶּן שֶׁמֶן) *in an horn of a son of oil*; planted in a fat and fruitful soil," that is, furnished with all possible means to make it fruitful. And "he fenced it;" protected it by his providence from the incursion of enemies; "and gathered out the stones thereof;" removed from it whatever was hurtful; it may be, the gods of wood and stone in an especial manner out of the land; "and planted it with the choicest vine;" in its order, ordinances, and institutions of worship: and "built a tower in the midst of it;" the strong city of Jerusalem in the midst of the land, which was built as "a city that is compact together, (all as one great tower) whither the tribes went up, the tribes of the Lord to the testimony of Israel, Psal. cxxii, 3, and also made a wine press therein;" the temple and altar continually running with the blood of sacrifices. "And he looked that it should bring forth grapes;" his expectations answer his care and dispensations towards his church. Ascribed to him, it only signifies what is just and equal, and which

in such cases ought to be, such a vineyard ought to bring forth grapes answerable to all the acts of God's care and grace towards it.

2. Such a day is the season that is allotted us for special work and duty. So the apostle informs us, 2 Pet. iii, 2, "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness!" What manner of persons we ought to be? Judge in yourselves, and act accordingly. Great light, great holiness, great reformation in hearts, houses, and churches are expected in such a day. All advantages of this season are to have their use and improvement, or we lose the end of it. Every thing that concurs to constitute such a day, hath advantages in it to promote special work in us, and if we answer them not, our time for it is irrecoverably lost; and what bitterness will this be in the end!

3. Every such day is a day of great trials. The Lord Christ comes in it with his fan in his hand, to sift and try the corn; "his fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather in his wheat into his garner, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." The *fan* of Christ is his *word*; and by the preaching of it, he separates the precious from the vile, the wheat from the chaff. He comes into his floor, the church, where there is a mixture of corn and chaff; he sifts and winnows them by his word and Spirit, casting off light, empty, and fruitless professors. Such a day is described by Daniel, chap. xii, 10, "Many shall be purified, made white and tried, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand." Many, that is, of the saints, shall be purified, (יתבררו) *purged*, made clean from such defilements as in their affections or

conversation they had contracted: and made white; shall be whitened in their profession; shall be rendered more eminent, conspicuous, and glorious; and tried, as in a furnace, that it may appear what metal they are made of: but wicked and false professors shall be discovered and so far hardened, that they shall go on, and grow high in their wickedness to their utter destruction. And therefore it concerns us heedfully to regard such a season; for,

4. Unto whom such a day is lost, they also themselves are lost. It is God's last dealing with them. If this be neglected, if this be despised, he hath done with them. He saith to them in it, "This is the acceptable time, this is the day of salvation." If this day pass over, night will come wherein men cannot work. So speaks our Savior concerning Jerusalem which then enjoyed that day, but was on the point of utterly losing it, Luke xix, 41, 42, "And when he was come near he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, if thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes." He wept, which is but once more recorded of him in the gospel, John xi, 35; and the word here used, (*εκλαυσε*) denotes a *weeping with lamentation*. A just consideration of the mournful subject moved his holy, tender, merciful heart, to the deepest commiseration. He did it also for our example; that we may know how deplorable and miserable a thing it is for a people, a city, a person to withstand or lose their day of grace. "If thou hadst known, even thou:" the reduplication is very emphatically, "*thou, even THOU;*" thou ancient city, thou city of David, thou seat of the temple and worship of the great God, thou ancient habitation of the church; "If thou hadst known;" or oh! that thou hadst known; "at least in this thy day,"

They had enjoyed many smaller days of grace, many messages or dealings of the prophets, as our Savior reminds them, Matt. xxi, 33—36. These they despised, persecuted, rejected, and so lost the season of their preaching; but they were days of less moment, and not decretory of their state and condition. "Another day" they were to have, which he calls "this their day;" the day so long foretold and determined by Daniel the prophet, wherein the Son of God was to come, and was now actually come amongst them; and what did he treat with them about? "The things which belong to their peace;" of repentance and reconciliation, the things which might have given them peace with God, and continued their peace in the world; but they refused these things, neglected their day, and suffered it to pass over their heads unimproved. What was the issue of all this? God would deal no more with them; the things of their peace shall now be hid from them, and themselves be left to destruction; for,

§25. When such a dispensation is lost, when the evening of such a day is come, and the work of it not accomplished.

1. It may be God will bring wasting destruction upon the persons, churches, or people that have despised it. So he dealt with Jerusalem, as it was foretold by our Savior in the place before mentioned, Luke xix, 43, 44. The things of thy peace are now over and hid from thee. What then shall follow? Why "the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee around, and keep thee in on every side; and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave within thee one stone upon another, because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation,"

Because thou hast not discerned thy day, nor regarded it, hast not answered the mind of God in it, all this shall speedily befall thee. The same hath been the issue of many renowned churches; the very places where they were planted are utterly consumed. Temporal judgments are oftentimes the issue of despised spiritual mercies.

2. God may, and sometimes doth, leave such people, churches, or persons, as have withstood his dealings by way of grace, to possess their outward station in the world, and yet hide the things of their peace utterly from them, by a removal of the means of grace. He can leave to men their kingdoms in this world, and yet take away the kingdom of heaven, and give it others. They may dwell still in their houses, but yet be in the dark, their candlestick and the light of it being consumed together. This is what God threateneth, 2 Thes. ii, 2—12, “Because men would not receive the truth in the love thereof,” or improve the day of their gospel which they enjoyed, “God sent them strong delusions that they should believe a lie.” And how came it to pass? By removing the sound and sincere preaching of the word, he gave advantage to seducers and false teachers to impose their superstition, idolatry, and heresies upon their credulity. So God punished the neglect and disobedience of the churches of Europe, under the papal apostasy. And let us take heed lest this vial of wrath be also poured upon us; or,

3. God may leave to such persons the outward dispensation of the means of grace, and yet withhold that efficacy of his spirit which alone can render them useful to the souls of men. Hence the word becomes to have a quite contrary effect to what it hath under the influences of special grace. God then spake to a people thus: Isa. vi, 9, 10, “Hear you indeed, but under-

stand not, and see you indeed, but perceive not: make the heart of this people fast, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and convert and be healed." I have now done with them, saith God; I have no design or purpose any more to deal with them about their conversion and healing: and therefore, although I will have the preaching of the word as yet continued among them, yet it shall have no effect upon them, but through their unbelief, to blind them and harden them to their destruction. And for these reasons, amongst others, ought such a day as we have described carefully to be attended to.

§26. This duty being of so great importance, it may be seasonably inquired, how may a man, how may a church know, that it is such a day, such a season of the gospel with them, so as to be suitably stirred up to the performance of such a duty? I answer they may know it two ways.

1. From the outward signs of it, as the day is known by the light and heat of the sun which is the cause thereof. Neglect and ignorance of this was charged by our Savior on the Jews frequently; see Matt. xvi, 3, "O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky, but ye cannot discern the face of the times." As God hath planted such signs in natural things, hath so ordered them, that one should be a sign and discovery of another; so he hath appointed signs of this day of grace, of the coming of the Messiah, whereby it also may be known. But these, saith he, you cannot discern; (*ὁ δυνάσθε*) *you cannot*; but withal he lets them know why they could not; because they were hypocrites; and either grossly neglected, or despised the means and advantages they had for that purpose. Herein consisted the wisdom of the children of Issachar,

that "they had understanding of the times to know what the children of Israel ought to do," 1 Chron. xii, 32.

2. Such a day or season will manifest itself by its efficacy. When God applies such a concurrence of means, he will make men one way or other sensible of his design and end. The word in such a day will either refine and reform men, or provoke and enrage them. Thus when the witnesses preach, which is a signal season of light and truth, they torment them that dwell on the earth, Rev. xi, 10. If they are not *healed*, they will be *tormented*. So it was at the first preaching of the gospel; some were converted, and the rest were hardened; a signal work passed on them all, and those who dispensed the word, became a good savor in them that were saved, and in them that perished. The consciences of men will discover their times.

§27. *Obs. 12.* The examples of our forefathers are objects of our deepest consideration; God in his dealing with them provides instructions for their posterity. When parents do well, when they walk with God, they beat the path of obedience plain for their children; and when they miscarry, God sets their sins as buoys, or as beacons, to warn them who came after of the shelves they split upon. "Be not as your fathers were, a stiff-necked generation," is a warning he often repeats. And it is in scripture an eminent part of the commendation, or discommendation of any, that they walked in the way of their progenitors. Where any of the good kings of Judah are spoken of for their integrity, this is still one part of the testimony given them, that "they walked in the way of David their father;" in the paths that he had trod before them. And on the other side, it is a brand on many of the



wicked kings of Israel, that "they walked in the ways of Jeroboam the son of Nebat." Their examples, therefore, are of concern to us. Oftentimes the same kind of temptations are continued to the children that the fathers were exercised with. Now it is a great warning to men, to consider what sad events have befallen them who went before, by yielding to the very temptations which they themselves are exercised with. Again, there is a blessing or a curse, that lies hidden in the ways of progenitors. There is a revenge for the children of the disobedient, to the third and fourth generation; and a blessing on the posterity of the obedient for a longer continuance. When fathers have made themselves obnoxious to the displeasure of God by their sins, let their posterity know, that there is an addition of punishment coming upon them beyond what, in the ordinary course of providence, is due to themselves, if they continue in the same sins. When one generation after another shall persist in the same provoking sins, the weight of God's indignation grows so heavy, that ordinarily, in one part or other, it begins to fall within the third or fourth generation. And doth it not concern men to consider what have been the ways of their forefathers, lest there be a secret consuming curse against them in the guilt of their sins? Repentance and forsaking their ways wholly intercepts the progress of the curse. Men know not what arrears may by this means be chargeable on their inheritances; and there is no avoiding the "writ for satisfaction," that is gone out against them, but by turning out of the way wherein they are pursued. The same is the case with the blessing that is stored for the posterity of the obedient, who are found in the way of their forefathers. These things render them and their ways objects of our considerations. For, moreover,

§28. *Obs.* 13. It is a dangerous condition for children to boast of the privilege of their fathers, and to imitate their sins. This was almost continually the state of the Jews. They were still boasting of their progenitors, and constantly walking in their sins. This they are every where in the scripture charged with, see Numb. xxxii, 14. This the Baptist reflected on in his first dealing with them; "Bring forth, saith he, fruits meet for repentance, and think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father," Matt. iii, 8, 9. On every occasion they still cried out, "we have Abraham to our father;" he who was so highly favored of God, and first received the promises, for his sake and by his means, it seems, they expected to be saved temporally and eternally. Hence they have a saying in their Talmud; "Abraham sits at the gates of hell, and will not permit that any transgressors of Israel shall go in thither." Exhilarating reserve against all their sins! what a pity the pleasing delusion will deceive them, as assuredly it will, when they are past relief. Whilst they trusted in their privileges, and continued in the sins of them who had abused them, it turned to their farther ruin. See Matt. xxix, 29—32; and let their examples deter others from countenancing themselves in privileges of any kind, whilst they come short of personal repentance, and obedient faith. Again,

§29. *Obs.* 14. A multitude joining in any sin gives it thereby a great aggravation. Those here that sinned were all the persons of one entire generation. This made it a formal open rebellion, a conspiracy against God, a design as it were to destroy his kingdom, and to leave him no subjects in the world. When many conspire in the same sin, it is a great inducement for others to follow. The opposition to God

therein is open and notorious, which tends greatly to his dishonor in the world. How God resented the provocation of Israel, is fully expressed in Numbers xiv, 20—36. In the whole discourse, (which sinners ought to read and tremble at) there is represented, as it were, such a rising of Divine anger and indignation as scarce appears again in the scripture. Thus it is for a multitude to transgress against God, as it were, by a joint conspiracy. Such will be the issues of all national apostasies and provocations!

§30. *Obs.* 15. The sinful actions of men against those who deal with them in the name, and according to the will of God, are principally against God himself. The people chode with Moses; but when God came to call them to an account, he says, they strove with *him* and provoked him. So Moses told the people to take them off from their vain pretences, and coverings of their unbelief, Exod. xxix, 2, "The whole congregation murmured against Moses and Aaron." But, saith he, ver. 4, "The Lord heareth your murmurings, which ye murmur against him; and what are we? Your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord." As if he had said, mistake not yourselves, it is God and not us, that you have to do with in this matter. What you suppose you speak only against us, is indeed directly, though not immediately, spoken against God. And under the New Testament, our Savior applies this rule to the dispensers of the gospel, Luke x, 16. Saith he, "He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me." To violate the authority of an ambassador among men is always esteemed as the dishonor of him by whom he is employed; especially if it be done to him in the discharge of his office. Nor are

kings or states ever more highly provoked, than when an injury or an affront is done to their ambassadors. According to the light of nature, what is done immediately against a representative as such, is done directly and intentionally against the person represented. So it is in this case. The enmity of men is against God himself, against his way, his work, his will, which his ambassadors do but declare. But these things in themselves are out of their reach, they cannot hurt them, nor will they own directly an opposition to them. Therefore are pretences invented against those who are employed by God; that under their covert they may execute their rage against God himself; but he sees that they are all but coverts for their lusts and obstinacy; that *himself* is intended while his messengers are attacked, and he esteems it so. Let the messengers of God take heed, that they neither act nor speak any thing but what they have sufficient warrant from him for. It is an impious and a dangerous thing to affix God's name to our own imaginations. God will not put his seal of approbation, unless we stand in his counsels, and be found in the ways of his will. There is no object of a more sad consideration, than to see some men persecuting others for their errors. They that persecute (suppose them in the right as to the matter in difference between them) do certainly act against God in what they pretend to act for him. For they usurp his authority over the souls and consciences of men. Whether we are to *do*, or to *suffer*, any thing for God, it is of great moment that we look well to our call or warrant. And then, when men are secured by the word and Spirit of God, but are conscious that their message is not their own, but his that sent them, that they seek not their own glory but his, they may have hence all desirable grounds of encour-

ment, support and consolation. They can be no more utterly prevailed against, that is, their *testimony* cannot, than can God himself. So he speaks to Jeremiah; "I will make thee a fenced brazen wall, they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee, for I am with thee to save thee, and deliver thee, saith the Lord," Jer. xv, 20. And in what they suffer, God is so far concerned in it, as to account all that is done against them, to be done against himself. Christ is hungry with them, and thirsty with them, and in prison with them, Matt. xxv, 35—37. Again,

§31. *Obs.* 16. Unbelief manifesting itself in a time of trial, is a most provoking sin. Unbelief, I mean, as working in a distrust of God, with respect to the dispensations of his providence. The Israelites here blamed were in the way of God, and no opposition ought to have discouraged them therein. To have a sufficient warrant of the presence and protection of God, is what makes faith and trust a duty. And this the Israelites had in the promise made to Abraham, and others of their forefathers. When he hath given us experience of his goodness and faithfulness, this adds a specialty to the general warrant for faith in the word of promise.

Here it may be inquired, what it is that makes any time or season to be a day of trial; seeing the miscarriage of men in such a season is expressed as a great aggravation of their sin; and they are the things following:

(1.) That there be a concernment of the glory of God in the performance of that duty wherein we are to act faith, or to trust in God. So God tried the faith of Abraham, in a duty wherein his glory was greatly concerned. For by his obedience in faith, it appeared to all the world that Abraham respected

God, and valued a compliance with his will above all things in the world. So God himself expresseth it, Gen. xxii, 12, "Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thy only son from me." This was the tenth and last trial that befell Abraham. Nine times had he been tried before.\*

Here, therefore, Abraham in a most especial manner acquits himself, whence God gives him that testimony; "Now I know that thou fearest God;" that is, now thou hast made it known beyond all exception: and this puts a blessed close to all his signal trials.

(2.) Difficulties and oppositions lying in the way of duty, makes the season of it a day of trial. When men have wind and tide with them in their sailing, neither their strength nor their skill is tried at all. But when all is against them, then it is known what they are. When the sun shines and fair weather continues, the houses that are built on the sands continue as well as those that are built on a rock. But when the rain and the floods and the winds come, they make the trial. Whilst men have outward advantages to encourage them in the ways of God, it is not known what principles they act from; but when their obedience and profession is attended with persecution, reproach, poverty, famine, nakedness, death, then it is tried what men build upon, and what they trust to; then it is to them a time of trial.

§32. Farther, to give light to our proposition we may inquire, how, or by what means, men act and

\*1. In his departure out of his country. 2. By the famine which drove him into Egypt. 3. In the taking of his wife there by Pharaoh. 4. In his war with the four kings. 5. In his hopelessness of issue by Sarah, whence he took Hagar. 6. In the law of circumcision. 7. His wife taken from him again by Abimelech. 8. His casting out of Hagar after she had conceived. 9. His expulsion of Ishmael.

manifest their unbelief at such a season. And this may be done several ways:

1. By *dissatisfaction* with that condition of difficulty, whereunto they are brought by providence for their trial. Herein principally did the Israelites offend in the wilderness; this occasioned all their murmurings and complaints whereby God was provoked. It is true, they were brought into many straits and difficulties; but they were brought into them for their trial by God himself, against whom they had no reason to repine or complain. And this is no small fruit and evidence of unbelief, when we like not, for instance, a state of providential poverty, want, dangers, or persecutions. If we like it not, it is from our unbelief, God expects other things from us: our condition is the effect of his wisdom, his care and love; and as such by faith ought it to be acquiesced in.

2. By the *omission* of any incumbent duty, because of the difficulties that attend it, and the opposition made to it. To be "fearful" and "unbelieving," go together, Rev. xxi, 9. Where our fear, or any other affection, influenced or moved by earthly things, prevails with us to forego our duty, there unbelief prevails in the time of our trials. And this way also in particular did the Israelites fail. When they heard of fenced cities and sons of Anak, they gave up all endeavors of going into the land of Canaan; and consulted of making a captain to lead them back again into Egypt. And no otherwise is it with them to forego their profession, because of the giant-like opposition which they find against it.

3. When men turn aside and seek for *unwarrantable assistances* against their difficulties. So did this people, they made a calf to supply the absence of Moses, and were contriving a return into Egypt to deliver

them out of their troubles. When men in any thing make flesh their arm, their hearts depart from the Lord, Jer. xvii, 5.

4. When men disbelieve plain and direct promises, merely on account of the difficulties that lie against their accomplishment; this reflects unspeakable dishonor on the veracity and power of God, and was the common sin of Israel in the wilderness. They limited God, and said, can he do this or that? Seldom it was they believed beyond what they enjoyed. Here lay the main cause of their sin and ruin; they had a promise of entering into the land, but they believed it not; and, as our apostle says, they could not enter in because of unbelief, a time of trial is the turn, the hinge of the church's peace or ruin. We see what their unbelief cost a whole generation in the wilderness; and these Hebrews, their posterity, were now upon the like trial. And the apostle by this instance plainly insinuates what would be the issue if they continued therein, which accordingly proved to be their utter rejection. Many pretend that they believe the promises of the covenant as to life and salvation, firmly and immoveably; God tries them by particular instances, of persecution, difficulty, straits, public or private. Here they abide not; but either complain and murmur, or desert their duty, or fall to sinful compliances, or are weary of God's dispensations; and this manifests their unsoundness.

§33. *Obs.* 17. There is commonly a day, a time, wherein, unbelief riseth to its height in provocation. We shewed before that there is a day, a special season of God's dealing with the sons of men, by his word, and other means of grace. After this, if not closed with, if not mixed with faith and obeyed, they either insensibly decline, in respect of their tender or efficacy



or are utterly removed. In like manner there is a day, a season wherein the unbelief of men in its provocation comes to its (*ακμῆ*) *height*, and uttermost issue, beyond which God will bear with them no longer, but will break off all gracious intercourse between himself and such provokers. This was the direct case with these Israelites. They had by their unbelief and murmuring, provoked God ten times. But the day of their provocation, the season when it arrived at its height, came not until this trial mentioned Numb. xiv, upon the return of the spies that went to search the land. Before that time God often reprov- ed them, was angry with them, and variously punished them; but he still returned to them in mercy and compassion; and still proposed to them an entrance into his rest according to the promise. But when the day once came, when the provocation of their unbelief was come to its height, then he would bear with them no longer, but “swears in his wrath that they should not enter into his rest.” And so it was with their posterity, as to their ecclesiastical and national state. God often sent unto them, and dealt variously with them by the prophets through several generations. Some of them they persecuted, others they killed, and upon the matter rejected them all, as to the main end of their message. But yet all this while God spared them, and continued them a people and a church. Their provocation was not come to its height, its last day was not come yet. At length, according to his promise, he sent his Son to them. This gave them their last trial; this put them to the same condition with their forefathers in the wilderness; as our apostle plainly intimates in the use of their example. Again, they despised the promises; as their fathers had done in the type and shadow, so did they when the sub-

stance of all promises was exhibited to them. This was the day of their last provocation, after which God would bear with them no more in similar patience; but enduring them for the space of near forty years, he utterly rejected them; sending forth his servants, he slew those murderers and burnt their city. This is that which our Savior at large declares in his parable of the householder and his husbandmen, Matt. xxi, 31—41.

§34. And thus in God's dealing with the antichristian state, there is a season wherein the angel "swears, that there shall be time no longer," Rev. x, 6, that God would no longer bear with them, or forbear them in their provocations and idolatries, but would thenceforth give them up to all sorts of judgments, spiritual and temporal, to their bitter confusions: yea, "send them strong delusions that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned, who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness," 2 Thes. ii, 11, 12. This day is uncertain, yet irrecoverable.

1. It is *uncertain*. Jerusalem knew not, in the entrance of her day, that her sin and unbelief were coming to their issue, and so was not awakened to their prevention; no more than the men of Sodom knew when the sun arose, that there was a cloud of fire and brimstone hanging over their heads. Men in their sins think they will do as at other times, that they shall still have space and time for their duty; but ere they are aware, they have finished their course, and filled up the measure of their sins. "As the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as birds that are caught in the snare, so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them," Eccles. ix, 12. For the day of the Lord's indignation comes as a snare on them that dwell on the face of the earth, Luke xxi,

35. And men are often crying peace, peace, when sudden destruction cometh upon them, 1 Thes. v, 3. When Babylon shall say, "I sit as a queen, and am no widow," (her sons being again restored to her) "and shall see no sorrow; then shall her plagues come in one day, death and mourning and famine, and she shall be utterly burnt with fire," Rev. xviii, 7, 8. Hence is Christ so often said to "come as a thief;" to manifest how men will be surprised by him in their sins and impenitency. This day is also,

2. *Irrecoverable*. When the provocations of unbelief come to their height, there is no room left for repentance either on the part of God or the sinner. Not for the sinner; since men, for the most part after this, have no thought of repenting. Either they see themselves irrecoverable, and so grow desperate; or become stupidly senseless and lie down in security. So those false worshippers in the Revelation; after time was granted them no longer, but the plagues of God began to come upon them, it is said, "they repented not, but gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven." Instead of repenting for their sins, they rage against their punishment. Repentance also in this matter is hid from the eyes of God; when Saul had finished his provocation, Samuel, denouncing the judgment of God against him, adds, "and also the strength of Israel will not lie, nor repent," 1 Sam. xv, 29. God confirms his sentence, and makes it irrecoverable, by the engagement of his own immutability. There is no alteration, no reprieve, no place for mercy when this day is come and gone, Ezek. xxi, 25.

§35. Let persons, let churches, let nations take heed lest they fall unawares into this evil day. I say *unawares*; because they know not when they may be overtaken by it. It is true, all the danger of it ariseth

from their own negligence, security, and stubbornness. If they will give ear to previous warnings, this day will never come upon them. It may not, therefore, be unworthy our inquiry, to search what prognostics men may have of the approach of such a day. And,

1. When persons, churches, or nations, have already contracted the guilt of various provocations, they may justly fear that their next shall be their last. You have, saith God to the Israelites, "provoked me these ten times;" that is, frequently, and now your day is come. You might have considered before, that I would not always thus bear with you. Hath God then borne with you in one and another provocation, temptation, backsliding; take heed lest the great sin lies at the door, and be ready to enter upon the next occasion. Take heed, "Gray hairs are sprinkled upon you, though you perceive it not." Death is at the door. Beware, lest your next provocation be your last. When your transgressions came to three and four, the punishment of your iniquities will not be turned away. When that is come, (and O that it may never come upon you, reader!) God will have no more to do with you, but in judgment, whether temporal or eternal.

2. When repentance, upon convictions of provocations, lessens or decays, it is a sad symptom of an approaching day, when iniquity will be completed. When the fixed bounds of this repentance are arrived at, all springs of it are dried up. When, therefore, persons fall into the guilt of many provocations, and God gives a manifest conviction of them by his word or providence, and they are humbled for them according to their light and principles; but if they find their humiliations, upon their renewed convictions, grow weak, and lessen in their effects, and they do not so reflect upon themselves with self-displacency as formerly,

nor so stir up themselves to amendment, as they have done upon former warnings or convictions, nor have in such cases their accustomed sense of the displeasure and terror of the Lord; let them beware, evil is before them, and the fatal season is at hand.

3. When various dispensations of God towards men have been fruitless; when mercies, judgments, dangers, deliverances, signally stamped with respect to their sins, but especially the warnings of the word, have been multiplied towards any persons, churches, or nations, and have passed over them without reformation or recovery, no doubt judgment is ready to enter, yea, into the house of God itself. Is it thus with any? Is this their case and condition? Let them please themselves while they list, they are like Jonah asleep in the ship, whilst it is ready to sink on their account. Sleepy professors, awake, and tremble! You know not how soon a great, vigorous, prevalent temptation may hurry you into your last provocation and ruin.

§36. *Obs.* 18. To distrust God, to disbelieve his promises, whilst a way of duty lies before us, after we have had experience of his goodness, power, and wisdom in his dealing with us, is a tempting of God, and a greatly provoking sin. And a truth this is that hath "meat in its mouth," or instruction ready for us, that we may know how to charge this aggravation of our unbelief upon our souls and consciences. Distrust of God is a sin that we are apt upon sundry perverse reasonings to indulge ourselves in, and yet is there nothing with which God is more provoked. Now it appears in the proposition, that sundry things are required to render a person, a church, or a people formally guilty of this sin. As,

(1.) That they be called to, or engaged in, some special way of God. And this is no extraordinary

thing; all believers who attend to their duty, will find it to be their state and condition. It is in his ways that we have his promises; and therefore it is in them, and with reference to them that we are bound to believe and trust in him; and, on the same account, in them alone can we tempt God by our unbelief. It is also required,

(2.) That, in this way, they meet with oppositions, difficulties, and hardships, which, whilst Satan and the world continue in power, they shall be sure to do. Yea God himself is pleased oftentimes to exercise them with sundry things of that nature. Thus it befell the people in the wilderness. Sometimes they had no bread, and sometimes they had no water; sometimes enemies assaulted them, and sometimes serpents bit them.

(3.) That they have received former experiences of the goodness, power, and wisdom of God in his dealings with them. That any one hath no experience of the special goodness and power of God towards him, hath been through his own negligence and want of observation, and not from any defect in God's dispensations. But as the most in the world take no notice of the effects of his care and goodness towards them; so many believers are negligent in treasuring up experiences of his special care and love towards them. When he hath revealed his ways to us, and made known to us our duty; when he hath given us pledges of his presence, and of his owning us, so as to seal and ascertain his promises to us; then, upon the opposition of creatures, or difficulties about outward, temporary, perishing things, for us to disbelieve and distrust him, must needs be an high provocation of the eyes of his glory. But alas! how frequently do we contract the guilt of this sin, both in our persons, families, and more public concerns? A due consideration of this lays be-

fore us, without doubt, matter of the deepest humiliation.

§37. *Obs.* 19. No place, no retiredness, no solitary wilderness will secure men from sin or suffering, provocation or punishment. These persons were in a wilderness, where they had many motives and encouragements to obedience, and no means of seduction and temptations from others, yet there they sinned, and there they suffered. They “sinned in the wilderness,” and “their carcasses fell in the wilderness.” They filled that desert with sins and graves. Men have the principle of their sins in themselves, in their own hearts, which they cannot leave behind them, or get rid of by changing their stations. And the justice of God, which is the principal cause of punishment, is no less in the wilderness than in the most populous cities. The wilderness is no wilderness to him; he can find its paths in all its intricacies. In this very wilderness, on the top of Sinai, there is at this day a monastery of persons professing themselves to be religious, who live there for cultivating superior piety. I once, for some days, conversed with their chief; they call him Archimandrite, here in England. For ought I could perceive, he might have learned as much elsewhere. I remember old Jerome somewhere complains, that when he was in his horrid cave at Bethlehem, his mind was frequently amongst the delecties of Rome. And this will teach us,

(1.) In every outward condition to look principally to our own hearts. We may expect great advantages from various conditions, but shall indeed meet with none of them, unless we fix and water the root of them in ourselves. One thinks he could serve God better in prosperity, if freed from the perplexities of poverty, sickness, and persecution. Others that they should serve him better if called to afflictions and tri-

als. Some think it would be better with them if retired and solitary; others if they had more society and company. But the only way to serve God better, is to abide in our station and condition, and therein to get better hearts. It is Solomon's advice (מכל מש מר) Prov. iv, 23, "Above, or before, every watch, or keeping, keep thy heart." It is good to keep the tongue, and it is good to keep the feet, and it is good to keep the way, as he farther declares in that place; but, saith he, above all keepings, keep thy heart; and he adds a great reason for his caution, for, saith he, "out of it are the issues of life." Life and death, in the means and causes of them, come out of the heart. So our Savior instructs us, that in our hearts lie our treasure; what they are, that we are, and nothing else. Thence are all our actions drawn forth, which not only "smell of the cask," but receive thence principally their whole moral nature, whether good or bad.

(2.) Look for all relief, and for help against sin, merely from grace. A wilderness will not help you; no, nor a paradise. In the one Adam sinned, in the other all Israel sinned. Men may to a good purpose go into a wilderness to exercise grace and the principles of truth, when the acting of them is denied elsewhere. But it is to no purpose to go into a wilderness to seek for these things; their dwelling is in the love and favor of God, and no where else can they be found. Do not expect that mercies of themselves will do you good, that the city or the wilderness will do you good; it is grace alone that can do that. And if you find inward benefits by outward things, it is merely from the grace that God is pleased to administer with them. And he can separate them when he pleaseth, he can give mercies that shall be so materially, but not eventually; like the quails that fed the bodies of the people,



whilst leanness possessed their souls. Learn, then, in all places, in every state and condition, to live in the freedom, riches, and efficacy of grace.

(3.) Let us learn, that whithersoever sin can enter, punishment can follow; (*culpam sequitur pœna pede claudo*) though vengeance seems to have a lame foot, yet it will hunt sin until it overtake the sinner. Psal. cxl, 2, "Evil shall hunt the violent man to overtake him." Go where he will, the fruits of his own evil and violence, the punishment due to them, shall hunt him and follow him; and though it should sometimes appear to be out of sight, or off from the scent, yet it will recover its view and chase, until it hath brought him to destruction. It will follow it into the dark, the dark corners of their hearts and lives; and overtake them in the light of the world. God hath (*εὐδικὸν ὄμμα*) *an eye of revenge* that nothing can escape. "Can any hide himself in secret places that I cannot find him? saith the Lord, do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord," Jer. xxiii, 24. God declares whom it is, that none can hide from his presence, or escape his justice. It is from his omnipresence; he is every where, and all places are alike to him. Adam, when he had sinned, went behind a tree. And others would go under rocks and mountains; but all is one, vengeance will find them out. This is that (*δική*) *vengeance*, which the barbarians thought would not let a murderer live, however he might escape for a season, Acts xxviii, 4.

§38. *Obs.* 20. Great works of Providence are a great means of instruction, and a neglect of them as to their instructive end is a great aggravation of sin. "They saw my works," saith God; works great and wonderful, and yet continued in their sin and disobedience. This heightened their sin, and hastened their

punishment. We shall take an instance in one of the works here intended, which will acquaint us with the design, end, and use of them all; I mean the appearance of the majesty of God on mount Sinai at the giving of the law. The works accompanying it, consisted much in things miraculous and unusual; as thunder and lightnings, fire and smoke and earthquakes, the sound of the trumpet, &c. The usual workings of the minds of men towards these uncommon effects of Divine power is to gaze on them with admiration and astonishment. This God forbids, Exod. xix, 21, "Charge the people lest they break through unto the Lord to gaze." This is not the design of God in these works of his power, in these appearances and evidences of his Majesty, that men should gaze at them to satisfy their curiosity. What then was aimed at in them? It was to instruct them in the due fear and awful reverence of God; whose holiness and majesty was represented to them; that they may know him as "a consuming fire." God doth not often utterly destroy men with great and tremendous destructions, before he hath given them previous warnings of his indignation. But yet men that are secure in sin, will have so little a sense of these warnings, that they will be crying, peace and safety when their final destruction is seizing upon them, 1 Thes. v, 3. God speaks out the curse of the law in his works of judgments. For thereby "is the wrath of God revealed from heaven against the ungodliness of men," Rom. i, 18. But yet, even when men hear the voice of the curse so pronounced, if they are secure they will bless themselves and say, "they shall have peace, though they add drunkenness to thirst," Deut. xxix, 19. And this for the most part blinds the eyes of the wise men of this world. They neither see nor understand any of the works of God,

though never so full of dread and terror; because being secure in their sin, they know not that they have any concernment in them. If at any time they attend to them, it is as the people did to the voice that came from heaven to our Savior; "some said it thundered, others that an angel spake;" one says one thing of them, another another thing, but endeavor not to come to any certainty about them. This is complained of, Isa. xxvi, 11, "Lord, when thy hand is lifted up they will not see." But they who will wisely consider their own condition, how it is between God and them, will discern the voice of God in his great works of providence, Dan. xii, 10, "Many shall be purified and made white and tried, but the wicked shall do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand." And when shall this be? When there is a time of great trouble, ver. 1. When God's judgments are greatly in the world, the end of these troubles is to purify them, to cleanse them by the removal of all filth of flesh and spirit that they may have contracted, as dross is taken away from silver in the furnace; and to make them white, by causing their sincerity, constancy, and perseverance in their holy profession to appear in their trials. But the wicked, men secure in their sins, shall yet continue in their wickedness; and thereby shall be so blind, that none of them shall understand the mind of God in his great works and tremendous dispensations. All the works of God, if duly considered, will be found to be as his image and superscription. They have on them marks and tokens of infinite wisdom, power, and goodness. Those of Providence, which he intends to be greatly instructive, have a peculiar impression of the design of God upon them; and a wise man may see the eye of

God in them. So he speaks in the psalmist, "I will guide thee with mine eye," Psal. xxxii, 8.

§39. *Obs.* 21. The greater evidence God gives of his power and goodness in any of his works, the louder is his voice in them, and the greater is the sin of those who neglect them; and if men will shut their eyes against the light, they justly perish in their darkness. God sometimes hides his power; Heb. iii, 4, "there was the hiding of his power." But sometimes he causeth it to shine forth. As in the same place, "he had horns coming out of his hand." Horns, or shining beams, rays of glory, arose from his hand, or his power in its manifestation by his works. He caused his wisdom and power to shine forth in them, as the sun gives out light in its full strength and beauty; then for men not to take notice of them, will be a signal aggravation of their sin, and hastening of their punishment. Now we can never know what appears of God in his works, unless by a due consideration of them we endeavor to understand them, or his mind in them. Again,

§40. *Obs.* 22. The end of all God's works, of his mighty works of providence, towards a person, a church, or nation, is to bring them to faith and dependence. "Who is wise, and he shall understand those things? Prudent, and he shall know them? For the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them, but the transgressors shall fall therein," Hos. xiv, 9. There is scarce a leaf in the book of God, or a day in the course of his providence, that doth not judge and condemn the folly and stupidity of their pride, who disregard the instructive lessons of Divine Providence. "Because they regard not the works of the Lord, nor consider the operations of his hands, he

shall destroy them and not build them up," Psalm xxv, 5.

§41. *Obs.* 23. God is pleased oftentimes to grant great outward means to those in whom he will not work more effectually by his grace. Who had more of the first than the Israelites in the wilderness? As the works of God amongst them were the greatest and most stupendous that ever he had wrought from the foundation of the world; so the law was first vocally given and promulgated amongst them; and not only so, they had the gospel also preached to them as well as we; not so clearly but no less truly, Heb. iv, 1. God might well say of them as he did afterwards of their posterity; "what could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?" Isa. v, 3; for fencing, and planting, and stoning, nothing more could have been done. He did not, indeed, exert an effectual power of inward grace during their enjoyment of the outward means; and in like manner when our Lord Jesus Christ preached the gospel to all; yet it was to some only it was given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God. Matt. xiii, 11—16. I know some are displeased at this; but for the most part they are such as will be pleased with nothing that God either saith or doth, or can do or say, unless he would give them a law or gospel to save them in and with their sins. They are ready to dispute that God is unjust, if he gave not grace to every man to use or abuse at his pleasure, whilst themselves hate grace and dispute it, and think it not worth acceptance if laid at their doors. But who art thou, O man, that disputest against God? Nay the righteousness of God in this matter is most conspicuous: for,

(1.) God is not obliged to grant any special privilege, as to the outward means of grace, to any of the

sons of men. And to shew his sovereignty and absolute freedom herein, he always granted them with great variety in a distinguishing manner. So he did of old; "He shewed his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not done so to any nation, and as for his judgments they have not known them," Psal. cxlvii, 19, 20. These outward means themselves were their peculiar privilege. This was the advantage of the Jews that to them, and to them alone, were committed the oracles of God, Rom. iii, 2. And as God granted these outward means of grace to them alone, so he might have justly denied them to them also; or else he might have granted them to all others to their exclusion. For he dealt not thus with them, because they were of themselves better than those who were excluded from their privileges; Deut. vii, 6—8. And thus God dealeth even to this day with the nations of the world. Some he entrusteth with the gospel, and some have not the sound of it approaching them. Man would not abide in the condition wherein God made him, Eccles. vii, 29. And God may justly leave him in that condition, into which by sin he hath cast himself. That he will afford outward means to any, is of mere liberality and bounty; and shall we say he is unjust if he give no more, when no rule or law of justice obligeth him to what he doth?

(2.) Even outward means themselves, when singly dispensed, have many blessed ends which shall be effected by them; for they all tend variously to the glory of God. That the wisdom, holiness, goodness, righteousness, and severity of God be exalted and glorified, as they are in the dispensation of the outward means of grace, though eventually not effectual to the salvation of some, is a matter of great rejoicing to all believers, as including important privileges. So saith our Savior,

Matt. xi, 23, "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shall be brought down to hell, for if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day." The exaltation of Capernaum consisted in its enjoyment of the outward means of grace, in the Redeemer's preaching and miracles. And although the end of all was that she was to be brought down to hell for her obstinacy in unbelief; yet whilst she enjoyed these things, she had a real privilege, and was much exalted thereby. There are then many mercies in this one of the outward means of grace, considered absolutely and in itself. Moreover,

(3.) Where God grants the use of the outward means of grace to any, ordinarily, if not always, he hath a design to communicate by them special saving grace to some. The gracious means granted to the people in the wilderness, where they seem to have had as sad an event as ever any means had in the world, were not lost, notwithstanding as to their use of conveying special grace to some. Some, yea doubtless many, were converted to God by them, and made obedient. That they died in the wilderness is no argument as to individuals, that they died all penally; for they were members and parts of that people, that provoking generation, which God dealt with according to the demerit of the community. And so many fall and are cut off penally in national desolations, as those desolations are just punishments for the sins of that nation, though themselves were not personally guilty of them. Now the saving of one soul is worth the preaching of the gospel to a whole nation for many years. And whilst God carries on his work visibly, he will take care secretly that not one hidden grain of his Israel shall fall to the ground.

§42. *Obs.* 24. No privileges, no outward means of grace, no other advantage whatever will secure men in a course of sinning from the wrath and justice of God. Who could be made partakers of more things of that kind than were his people at that time? Besides the great privilege derived to them from their fathers, in that they were the posterity of Abraham the friend of God, and had the token of his covenant in their flesh, they had newly erected amongst them a glorious church state, wherein they were entrusted with all the ordinances of God's worship. These privileges the apostle sums up, Rom. ix, 4, 5, "Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God and the promises; whose are the fathers." Doubtless they bare themselves high on these things. So when they contended with Moses and Aaron, their plea was, that all the people were holy. Some cry they are the church, and some boast of other things; but be men what they will, their privileges and advantages what they can desire; if they are secure and obstinate sinners, the wrath of God at one time or other will overtake them. For although the hand of church-privilege should join in with the hand of secular advantage, yet the guilty shall not go unpunished.

§43. *Obs.* 25. The heart of God is greatly concerned in the sins of men; especially of those who on any account are his people, and so esteemed. Men live, and act, and speak, as if they thought God very little concerned in what they do, especially in their sins; they think that God is altogether as themselves, Psal. 1, 21. But it is far otherwise. For God,

(1.) Is concerned in point of honor in what we do. He made us for his glory and honor; but nothing of this can we any way assign to him but by our obedi-



ence. And whatever is contrary to that tends directly to his dishonor. And this God cannot but be deeply sensible of. He cannot deny himself. Shall God lose all his just revenue without expressing an indignation against the guilt of men who deal so unjustly and fraudulently with him? Nay, he is as our sovereign Lord, deeply concerned in this matter.

(1.) He is concerned in point of justice, also, as he is the supreme Ruler and Governor of all the works of his own hands. He is God to whom vengeance belongeth; who hath said, "vengeance is mine, and I will recompense." And he needs no other reason to induce him to punish transgression, but his own holiness and justice. And this he expreseth after the manner of men, affirming that he is grieved, or vexed and provoked to indignation with the sins of men.

§44. *Obs.* 26. In all the sins of men God chiefly regards the principle, that is, the heart, or what is in it. They do err, saith he, "in their hearts." The heart he principally requires in our obedience, and this he principally regards in men's disobedience. "My son, saith he, give me thine heart;" and "O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me." When the heart is upright, as to its general frame, God will bear with many failings, many miscarriages. And when it is false, thousands of duties are of no esteem with him. If once a man begins justly to suspect that the hearts of them with whom he hath to do, are not upright with him, but false and guileful, let them pretend what they will, and act what they please, all is utterly disregarded and despised. And if it be thus with men who judge of the heart of others only by effects, how much more must it be so with God, before whose eyes all the hearts of men lie open and naked;

whose glory and property it is to be (*καρδιογνωστής*) the *knower*, searcher, and judge of all hearts. Again,

§45. *Obs. 27.* The error of the heart in preferring the ways of sin, before obedience with its promises and rewards, is the root of all great provoking sins and rebellions against God. Many sins are the effects of men's impetuous lusts and corruptions; many there are hurried into by the power and efficacy of temptations; most are produced by both these in conjunction: but as for great provocations, such as carry in them apostasy or rebellion against God, they proceed from a deceiving and a deceived heart. There are many noisome and hurtful errors in the world; but this is the great soul ruining error, when the heart is practically corrupted, to prefer sin and its wages before obedience and its reward. In brief, when the directive part of the mind is diverted from attending to the reason of the things proposed; when it is corrupted by false pretences imposed on it by the outrage of corrupt lusts and affections, which have possessed the imagination with their objects, and their present deceivableness. When the accusing judging faculty is baffled, slighted, and at best partially silenced, as wearied with doing its work in vain, and accustomed to repulses: when in its reflective acts, whereby it should receive impressions from its own self-accusations and reproofs, are made obtuse, hard, and senseless, not regarding what is spoken in it or to it; and when by these means carnal affections bear sway in the soul, impetuously inclining it to seek after their satisfaction; then is the heart under the power of the error we speak of, that error which is the principle of all great provocations and ruinous apostasies from God.

For, this heart error sets all the lusts of the soul at liberty to seek after their satisfaction in sin; makes it

slight and contemn all the promises annexed to obedience, and disregard the threatenings that lie against sin; and so prepares it for the utmost rebellion. And of all errors let us take heed of this practical error of the heart. It is not men's being orthodox or sound in their opinions that will relieve them, if they are under the power of this great fundamental error. And it is a matter to be lamented, to see how men will contest for their opinions under the name of truth, and cast all manner of severe reflections on those that oppose them, whilst themselves err in their hearts and know not the ways of God. And this is a frame which of all others God most abhorreth. For when men pretend to be for him, and are really against him, as all such are, shall not the Searcher of hearts find it out? Orthodox liars, swearers, drunkards, adulterers, oppressors, persecutors, are an unspeakable burden to the patience of God. Again,

§46. *Obs.* 28. A constant persisting in the course of sin, is the utmost, highest, and last aggravation of sin. They err always in every instance of obedience, and that continually. This filled up their measure. For herein consists that finishing of sin which brings forth death, 1 James i, 14. Sin may be conceived and brought forth, and yet death not ensue. But if it be finished, if men err in their hearts "always," inevitable destruction will be the consequent of it. This, as was said, is the highest and last aggravation of sin. For,

(1.) It includes a neglect and contempt of all times and seasons of amendment. God gives to men, especially those who live under the dispensation of the word, many peculiar times or seasons for their recovery. They have their "day," their special day, wherein they ought in an especial manner to look after the things of their peace. It may be this day, is often

revived to the persons spoken of, and often returned upon them; but it is as often despised and neglected by them.

(2.) It includes a rejection and disappointment of the means of repentance, which God is pleased graciously to afford them. During the season of his patience towards sinners, God is pleased to grant them sundry means and advantages for their amendment, and that in great variety; but they are all rejected and rendered fruitless in an unchanged course of sinning.

(3.) It includes a contempt of the whole work of conscience from first to last. Many assistances doth conscience receive in its work. Convictions from the word, excitations by judgments, mercies, dangers, deliverances; but yet in this condition all its actings are baffled and despised. And what can be more done against God? What can add to the guilt of such sins and sinners? And this may serve to justify God in his severity against persons that "always err" in their hearts, that continue in a course of sinning. In the day when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, and all transactions between God and the souls of men laid open, the holiness, righteousness, and just severity of God against impenitent sinners, will, on these and other accounts, be gloriously displayed.

§47. *Obs.* 29. None despise or desert the ways of God, but those that know them not. Or, whatever they may profess, profligate sinners know neither God nor his ways. "They err in their hearts and have not known my ways." Who would seem more fully to have known the ways of God than his people? The ways of his providence wherein he walked towards them, and the ways of his law wherein they were to walk towards him, were all before them. And yet all this while, being unbelieving and obdurate, they knew

not the ways of God; nay, though they professed that they knew, and that they would observe them, yet in truth they knew them not. And such were their posterity and successors in unbelief and disobedience, of whom the apostle speaks, Titus i, 16; "They profess that they know God, but in works they deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." Whatever notions such persons have, or may have, of the ways of God, whatever skill in the outward letter of his laws and institutions, yet they know neither their righteousness, nor the holiness, nor the grace, nor the efficacy, nor the usefulness, nor the beauty of any of them. These things are spiritually discerned, and they are spiritually blind; these are spirit and life, and they are flesh and dead. And all this is evident from men's despising the ways of God, or their dereliction of them. This none can do but those that know them not. For they that know the name of the Lord, that is, any of the ways whereby he reveals himself, will put their trust in him, Psalm ix, 10. Julian, that infamous apostate, was wont to boast concerning the scriptures, that he had read them, known them, and condemned them: unto whom it was truly replied, that if he had *read* them, yet he *understood* them not, of which there needed no other evidence but that he condemned them.

§48. *Obs.* 30. When God expresseth great indignation in himself against sin, it is to teach men the greatness of sin in themselves. For that end is he said here, to "swear in his wrath." There are expressions in scripture about God's respect to the sins of men, that are strangely emphatical. As sometimes he is said to be "pressed under them as a cart is pressed when laden with sheaves;" sometimes, that he is made to "serve

with sin," and "wearied with iniquity;" sometimes to be "broken with the whorish heart of a people;" and "grieved at the heart that he had ever made such a creature as man;" sometimes that the sins of men are "a fume in his nostrils," that which his soul loatheth; and very commonly to be angry, vexed, and grieved, to be wrathful, stirred up to fury, and the like. What is it then that God intends by all these expressions? it is all to express what indeed sin deserves, and that a recompense of revenge is to be expected, or that it is of so great a demerit as to excite all the perturbations mentioned in the nature of God, were it any way capable of them. So doth he make use of all ways and means to deter us from sin. And there is much love, tenderness, and care in all these expressions of anger, wrath, and displeasure. Again,

§49. *Obs.* 31. God gives the same firmitude and stability to his threatenings as he doth to his promises. He swears to them also. Men are apt secretly to harbor a supposition of a difference in this matter. The promises of God they think indeed are firm and stable; but as for his threatenings, they suppose that one way or other they may be evaded. It was by this deceit sin came into the world; namely, that the threatenings of God either would not be accomplished, or that they were to be understood after another manner than was apprehended. "Hath God said so, that you shall die if you eat? Mistake not, this is not the meaning of the threatening; or, if it be, God doth not intend to execute it; it will be otherwise, and God knows it will be otherwise." This gave sin its first entrance into the world; and the same deceit still prevails in the human mind. Hath God said that sinners shall die, shall be cursed, shall be cast into hell? Nay, but sure enough it will be otherwise, there will be one way or other to

escape. It is good enough to affright men with these things, but God intends not so to deal with them. Whatever the threatening be, many things may intervene to prevent their execution. What God *promiseth* indeed, shall come to pass, we may expect it and look for it. But as for these *threatenings* they depend on so many conditions, and may so easily at any time be evaded, as that there is no great fear of their execution. But what is the ground of this feigned difference between the promises and threatenings of God, as to their stability, certainty, and accomplishment? Where is the difference between the two clauses in that text; “he that believeth shall be *saved*,” and “he that believeth not shall be *damned*?” Is not the holiness of God and his faithfulness as much concerned in the comminatory as in the promissory part of his word? Would not a failure in the one be as prejudicial to his glory as a failure in the other? The principles from which his threatenings proceed, are no less essential properties of his nature, than those which are springs of his promises. And his declaration of them is no less accompanied with the engagement of his veracity and faithfulness, than that of the other. And the end aimed at in them is no less necessary to the demonstration of his glory, than that which he designeth in his promises. And we see, in this particular instance, that they are also confirmed with the oath of God, even as his promises are. And let none think that this was an extraordinary case, and concerned only the men of that generation; this oath of God is part of his law, it abides for ever; and all that fall into the like sin with them, attended with the like circumstances, do fall under the same oath of God; he swears concerning them, that they shall not enter into his rest. And we little know how many are even in this world in this predicament,

the oath of God lying against them for their eternal punishment. Let men take heed of this great self-deceiving; and let them not be mockers in this matter lest their bonds be made strong; for,

§50. *Obs. 32.* When men have provoked God by their impenitency to decree their irrevocable punishment, they will find severity in the execution. They shall not enter, no not so much as *enter* into his rest. Behold, saith our apostle, the severity of God; towards them that fell severity, Rom. xi, 22. Men will find that there is severity in the execution, who despised the threatening; and that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. When sinners shall see the whole creation on fire about them, hell opening under them, and the glorious dreadful Judge over them, they will begin to have a due apprehension of his terror. But *then* cries, repentings, and wailings will be of no use. *This* is the time and place for such considerations, not when the sentence is executed, nor when it is irrevocably confirmed.

§51. *Obs. 33.* It is the presence of God alone that renders any place or condition good or desirable. They shall not, saith God, enter into "my rest." This makes heaven to be heaven, and the church to be a desirable place; every thing answers the manner and measure of the presence of God. And with this Moses expressly preferred the wilderness before Canaan. "If thy presence go not with us, lead us not up hence."



## VERSE 12.

*Take heed brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.*

§1, 2. (I.) The words explained. §3. Unbelief is either negative, or privative. §4. The unbelief intended consists in either, 1. Refusing to believe, or, §5. 2. Rejecting the faith. §6. Which operates in a dislike of gospel purity, and §7. Of gospel mysteries. §8. The special evil is, a departure from the living God. §9—14. (II.) Observations.

§1. **I**N the three following verses there are three things in general proposed:

*First*, An exhortation to avoid an evil, even that which it is the apostle's principal design to dissuade them from, ver. 12.

*Secondly*, A proposal of one useful means whereby they may be assisted in its avoidance, ver. 13.

*Thirdly*, An enforcement of the exhortation to the use of that means, from sundry considerations, ver. 14.

§2. (I.) "Take heed lest there be in any of you." The original term ( $\beta\lambda\epsilon\tau\omega$ ) is *properly* (*video*) to see and behold, as an act of sense; then (*caveo*) to take heed, or beware, as an act of the mind; and when used as an act of sense, it commonly refers to expectation, either of some good to be received, or of some inconvenience to be watched against. And because men look out, or look about them, to beware of dangers, the word is used for "to take heed," or "beware." In this sense it is often used in the New Testament, yea, so far as I have observed, it is peculiar to the sacred writers; and especially it is frequently used by our apostle, as 1 Cor. i, 26; chap. x, 10; Phil. iii, 2; Eph. v, 18; Col. ii, 8; and sometimes it is used transitively instead of to consider, 1 Cor. i, 26, "Consider your calling;" chap. x, 18, "Consider Israel according to the flesh." Sometimes it is has a reciprocal pronoun joined with it; ( $\beta\lambda\epsilon\pi\epsilon\iota\epsilon\ \epsilon\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\varsigma$ ) 2 John, viii, "Consider

or look well to yourselves." Sometimes it is used absolutely, as here, and signifies to beware of somewhat. Care, heedfulness, circumspection with respect to danger and opposition, and those imminent or near, is that which the word imports. "Lest there be in any of you." The first word (*μηποτε*) is somewhat more emphatical than the "lest," whereby alone we render it. Some translations say (*ne forte*,) *lest perchance*, with respect to a dubious event. Others, (*ne quando*) *lest at any time*. Lest "there be (*εν τινι υμων*) *in any of you*; the apostle speaks to them collectively to take care that none be found amongst them with such an heart as he cautions them against. And this consequentially falls on every individual; for when all are spoken to, each one is concerned. The same kind of expression is used to the same purpose, chap. xii, 15, 6. Watching, overseeing mutually with diligence, lest any among you fail of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; lest there be any fornicator or profane person as Esau.

§3. The principle of the evil is "an evil heart of unbelief;" (*της απιστίας*) *of unbelief*, here denotes the principal efficient cause, rendering the heart so evil, as that it should depart from the living God. There is something peculiar in this expression, "an heart of unbelief;" this, under the power of it, principled by it in its actings. Unbelief is usually distinguished into negative and privative. Negative unbelief is wherever any believe not, or have not faith, although they never had the means of believing; and such cannot be said to have in them an "evil heart of unbelief." Privative unbelief is where men believe not, although they enjoy the means of faith or believing; and herein consists the highest acting of the depraved nature of man, being

on many accounts the greatest provocation of God that a creature can make himself guilty of. For it is, as might be manifested, an opposition to God in all the properties of his nature, and in the whole revelation of his will. Hence the gospel, which is a declaration of of grace, mercy, and pardon, though it condemn all sin, yet denounceth the final condemnation of persons only against this sin. "He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned," Mark xvi, 16.

§4. Now this privative unbelief (which the apostle intends) is twofold, and consists, first, in refusing to believe when it is required; secondly, in rejecting the faith after it hath been received. We shall consider both:

1. When the object of faith, or that which is to be believed, is according to the mind of God, and in the ways of his appointment, proposed to men; when sufficient evidence is given to the truth and goodness of what is so proposed, and the authority is made known on which faith is required, yet they refuse to believe. Now as this hath its root in the natural darkness, blindness, and depravedness of the minds of men, so it is not educed and acted without new sinful prejudices, and stubbornness of the will, refusing to consider the evidences given to the truth proposed, or the goodness and excellency of the things themselves; nor is it acted without signal effects of hardness of heart, love of sin and pleasure, keeping men off from the obedience required. The root of this unbelief is in the original depravation of our natures with that spiritual impotency, and enmity to God, wherein it consists. Besides this general cause of unbelief, when it comes to particular instances, and the gospel is proposed to this or that man for his assent and submission, there is always some

special corruption of mind, voluntarily acted, if the soul be kept off from believing; and on that account principally, and not merely original impotency and enmity against God, is the guilt of unbelief reflected upon sinners. There is the same fundamental cause of unbelief in all that refuse the gospel; but the next immediate proper cause of it is peculiar to every individual. Some are kept off from believing the gospel; for instance, by inveterate prejudices in their minds, which they have taken in upon corrupt principles and interests; and this shut up of old most of the Jews under their unbelief. They had received many prejudices against the person and doctrine of Christ, which on all accounts they expressed, and so were offended at him. And so it is with many at all times. Prejudices against the preachers of the gospel on sundry accounts, and against their doctrine, as either useless, or false, or unintelligible, or somewhat they know not what, but which they do not like, keep them off from attending to the word and believing, see John v, 44. To some an especial obstinacy of will from those prejudices offereth itself in this matter; so our Savior tells the Pharisees, John v, 40, "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life;" they put forth a positive act of their wills in refusing and rejecting him. And on this account the guilt of men's unbelief is absolutely resolved into their own wills. Love of sin with some, (and it is the most common path to ruin) is the immediate cause of their actual unbelief; John iii, 19, "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil." They like not the terms of the gospel because of their resolutely wilful love of sin, and so perish in their iniquities. Stupid ignorance, arising from the possession, which other things inconsistent

with faith and obedience, have of the minds of men, is another cause. So our apostle tells us, 2 Cor. iv, 4, That "the God of this world hath blinded the eyes of them that believe not lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." When the minds of men are irradiated with the light of the gospel, it is that they may believe; for by that light is faith produced. How is this obstructed? it is by the darkness and blindness of their minds. What darkness is this? is it what is common to all? no, but that which is in a peculiar manner brought on the minds of some men, who, by the crafts and deceit of the God of this world, are kept in a stupid and brutish ignorance of spiritual things. This keeps them from believing, and fully clears the holiness and righteousness of God in his judgments, against final and impenitent unbelievers, to whom the gospel is preached: For as that impotency which is in them naturally, is culpable; and it is no excuse for them for not believing, because of themselves they could not so do; seeing it is by their own default that they are brought into that condition: so every one in his own person, who believeth not, doth by a voluntary act reject the gospel, and that on such corrupt principles as none can deny to be his sin.

§5. 2. There is an unbelief that consists in a rejection of the truth after it hath been admitted and professed. Some after they have been convinced of the truth, and made profession of it, yet through the temptations of the world, the corruption of their own hearts, love of sin, or fear of persecution, suffer their convictions to wear off, or cast them out, and reject the faith they have owned. He hath already withstood the efficacy of the only remedy for his distempers who hath rejected and despised it, what can cure

him? "It had been better for men not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandments delivered to them," 2 Pet. ii, 21. Renegadoes from the gospel are the greatest villains in the world; nor do men voluntarily renounce the light, but to give themselves up to the deeds of darkness. The corruptions of such men absolutely prevail over their convictions, and the power of sin in their wills and affections, casts off all influencing light from their understanding. And this is the condition of unspeakable multitudes in the world.

Satan will be casting fiery darts at the soul, but when the shield of faith is held up constantly and stedfastly they are immediately quenched; Ephes. vi, 16, yes, it is the work of faith to arm the soul on all hands, that assaults make no impression upon it; and when it is brought but to parley with an objection, then unbelief is at work. Innumerable are the opposite inclinations, objections, and temptations that lie in the way of professing the gospel, especially against exemplary stedfastness: and to hearken to what Satan suggests, to reason with the world, to consult with flesh and blood, contains the first actings of unbelief towards corrupting the heart in order to a departure from God. While our Savior taught the multitude, in general terms, of "the bread of God that came down from heaven," they were pleased with it, and cried, Lord give us evermore of this bread," John vi, 34, but when he began to acquaint them in particular that he himself was that bread, that his flesh was meat, and that his blood was drink, that is, that they were the spiritual nourishment of the souls of men, especially as given for them in his death; they began to be offended and to murmur, crying, "This is an hard saying, who can bear it?" verse 60, 61. And what was the effect

of this dislike? Plain and open apostasy, ver. 66, "From that time many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him." And whence did this dislike and murmuring arise? It was merely the acting of their unbelief, as our Lord declared, ver. 63, 64, "My words," which you so dislike, "are spirit and life, but there are some of you that believe not." The young man mentioned, Matt. xix, had a great respect for the teachings of Christ, for he comes to him to be instructed in the way to eternal life; but when our Lord Jesus proceeded to make a particular trial of him in a special instance, bidding him "sell what he had, and give to the poor, and follow him;" this he liked not, but went away sorrowful," ver. 21, 22.

§6. Unbelief sometimes operates in a dislike of the purity, simplicity, and spirituality of gospel worship. This was that wherein our apostle had principally to do with the Jews; who were apt to admire the pompous worship of the temple, and so to dislike the naked simplicity of the gospel institutions. Hence, the pagans of old objected to the Christians, that they had a worship without temples, altars, images, or pompous ceremonies; whence they looked on them as mere atheists. And this dislike of the purity and simplicity of the gospel worship is that which gave rise and increase to the whole Roman apostasy. The severity and universality of obedience which it requireth, is another thing that unbelief dislikes; and makes abundant use of the flesh to this purpose. Something or other it would be gratified in, within doors or without, or at least be spared, and not in all things pursued as the gospel requires. To be always and in all things, private and public, personal and relative, mortified, crucified, and denied, and to have no rest given it, the flesh likes not; and unbelief makes use of so unwel-

come a task to bring the whole soul into a dislike of that doctrine whereby it is required. Many professors have been quite wearied out with an observance of that holiness which this profession requireth; and hence it is that commonly there are most apostates from the strictest ways of profession. The more universally holiness is pressed, the more weary will prevailing unbelief make men of the ways of God.

§7. A secret dislike of the principal mysteries of the gospel is the original cause of most of the degeneracies, backslidings, and apostasies that are found amongst professors in these latter days. The testimonies to them being so many, so plain, so uncontrolable, what is it that can carry men to contradict them to their own ruin? Why, unbelief doth not like them, and particularly this mystery of "God manifest in the flesh;" and this anti-christian principle insensibly alienates the soul from it, however plainly asserted in scripture; and what men pretend to receive by the conduct of mere reason and argument, is indeed nothing but prejudices imposed on their minds by the power of unbelief. From the power of this proud principle men think it a foolish thing to look for pardon and righteousness solely from another, and not trust to themselves in any thing: and the reason why they have multiplied instances to the same purpose is, because they can indeed find rest and satisfaction in none other, and do therefore please and deceive their souls with this variety. And what is it that hath driven a company of poor deluded souls amongst ourselves, to trust a fancied light within them, and a feigned perfection in their ways? They cannot, forsooth, think it wise, prudent, or safe, to trust for their all one who lived and died so long ago. Men make sundry pretences, use divers arguments and pleas for



turning aside to their own crooked paths, and endeavor by all means possible to justify themselves; but the bottom of all lies here, that this doctrine of the cross is foolishness to them; and they are under the power of their unbelief which dislikes the mysteries of it. That the just should suffer for the unjust; the innocent undergo the punishment due to the guilty; that one should sin, and another suffer; that he whom God loved above all, should undergo his wrath for them, and deliver them whom he had grounds of righteousness to hate and destroy, is a foolish thing to them. This all the Socinians in the world despise; and it is rejected by the Quakers amongst ourselves; and variously corrupted by the Papists, and others. And there is none of all these, but will plead reasons and arguments for their opinions: but this that we insist on is the true and real ground of their miscarriages. They are under the power of that unbelief, which acts itself by a dislike of the mysteries of the gospel.

§8. The next thing in the words is that special evil which the apostle cautions the Hebrews against; as that which an heart made evil by the prevalency of unbelief would tend to the “departing from the living God;” the object of this departure is particularly expressed (*απο Θεου ζωντος*) “from the living God.” “It is plain that apostasy from the profession of the gospel is intended; and we must inquire into the reasons why the apostle doth thus peculiarly express it by “a departure from the living God.” I shall propose those which to me seem most natural.

1. It may be that these Hebrews thought little that their departure from the profession of the gospel was a departure from the living God. Probably they rather pretended and pleaded, that they were returning to him. For they did not fall off to idols or idolatry,

but returned to observe, as they thought, the institutions of the living God, and for a relinquishment whereof the blaspheming and persecuting part of them traduced our apostle himself as an apostate, Acts xxi, 28. To obviate these apprehensions, and that they might not thereby countenance themselves in their defection, the apostle lets them know, that after the revelation of Christ and a profession of him, there is no departure from him and his institutions, but that men do withal depart from the living God. So John positively declares, 2 Epist. 9; "whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God; but he that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." He then that rejects Christ in the gospel, let him pretend what he will of adhering to one God, cleaves to an idol of his own heart; for neither is the Father without the Son, nor is he a God to us but in and by him.

2. It may be he would mind them of the person and nature of him from whom he would prevent their departure; namely, that however in respect of his office, and as he was incarnate, he was our mediator, our apostle and high priest; yet in his own divine person he was one with his Father and the blessed Spirit, "the living God."

3. And as this property of life, as it is in God essentially, whence he is called the "living God," is exceedingly and eminently accommodated to encourage us to faith, trust, and affiance in him in all straits and difficulties in the way of duty, as our apostle declares, 1 Tim. iv, 10; "for therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God; or, this is that which encourageth us to, and supporteth us in all our laborings and sufferings, because he in whom we trust, from whom we expect present assistance and a

future reward, is the “living God;” so it is that which deservedly casts the greatest awe and terror upon the minds of men in their sins and rebellion against him. Thus he frequently prefaceth expressions of his severity against stubborn sinners with “as I live, saith the Lord;” as it were bidding them to consider what they were to expect. And this seems to me the principal reason why the apostle thus states the sin of their apostasy as “a departure from the living God.”

4. He may also express it, at once to intimate the greatness and folly of their sin. They thought, it may be that it was but the leaving of these or the other observances, but, saith he, it is a departure, a flagitious defection and revolt from the living God. And who knows not that this is the greatest sin and highest folly imaginable, to depart from him who will be so great a reward to them that obey him, and so severe a judge of them that forsake him; what greater guilt or folly is the nature of man capable of?

§9. (II.) From the words thus explained, the following observations offer themselves:

*Obs.* 1. There is need of great care, heedfulness, watchfulness, and circumspection, for a due continuance in our profession to the glory of God and advantage of our own souls. A careless profession will issue in either apostasy, open or secret; or at least great distress; Matt. xiii, 4; Cant. iii, 1—5. Our Christian profession is a warfare, and those who are not circumspect in war, will assuredly be a prey to their enemies; be their strength never so great, one time or other they will not avoid a fatal surprisal. And there is a necessity of this heedful attendance, for the manifold duties that are incumbent on us; our whole life is a life of duty and obedience; if we fail in matter or manner, we spoil the whole; for (*bonum oritur ex integris, malum ex quolibet defectu*) “any one defect is enough to denominate

an action evil; but to that which is good there must be a concurrence of all necessary circumstances." And who is sufficient for these things? God alone by his spirit and grace can enable us; but he works these things by us as well as in us; and, where he gives success, gives heedful diligence.

(1.) In a due consideration of our dangers; he that walks in the midst of snares and serpents, and goes on confidently without consideration of his danger, as if his paths were all smooth and safe, will one time or other be entangled or bitten. "A prudent man foreseeth the evil and hideth himself, but the simple pass on and are punished," Prov. xxii, 3. It is the highest folly not to look out after dangers, which usually end in sorrow, trouble, and punishment. Men at sea that are in the midst of rocks and shelves, and consider it not, will hardly avoid a shipwreck. Livy tells us, that Philopoemenes, that wary Grecian commander, wherever he went, though he were alone, was still considering all the places he passed by, how an enemy might possess them, and lay ambushes in them to his disadvantage, if he should command an army in those places. Hereby he became the most wary and expert captain of his age. So should a Christian do: he should always consider where, and by what means, his spiritual adversaries may ensnare or engage him, and so either avoid or oppose them, and not, like the simple, pass on heedlessly, and be punished.

(2.) In a due consideration of the special nature of those snares and dangers that we are exposed to. But here custom, security, false pleasing confidence of our own strength, negligence and sloth, all put in to delude us; and if we are here imposed upon, that we weigh not aright the nature and efficacy of our own

peculiar snares and temptations, we shall assuredly at one time or other fail in the course of our obedience.

(3.) It is so to heed them as to endeavor to avoid and oppose them; and that in all their occasions and advantages; in their whole work and efficacy. We are not only to consider them when they assault us, but to watch against all ways whereby they may do so; in being always ready, armed, and standing on our guard; in calling in help and assistance; and in improving the supplies granted us with faithful diligence. The negligence and sloth of many professors can never be enough bewailed; they walk at all adventure, as if there were no devil to tempt them; no world to seduce, ensnare, or oppose them; no treachery in their own hearts to deceive them. And hence it is that many are sick, and many are weak, and some are fallen asleep in sin; but what our Savior said to all of old, he says still to us; watch. Mark xiii, 37.

§10. *Obs. 2.* Godly jealousy concerning, and watchfulness over the whole body, that no beginnings of backsliding from Christ and the gospel be found amongst them, is the duty of all churches of believers. Mutual watchfulness over one another, by each person in any society, is a prime dictate of the law of our creation; and every neglect of it implies something of murder, 1 John iii, 11—15. In a church relation the obligation is ratified by institution. Upon the officers of the church it is incumbent by way of office; on all believers, as members of the church by way of love, Levit. xix, 17, “Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart; thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him.” He that doth not watch over his brother to prevent his sin, or recover him from it, as much as lies in him, he hates him, and is so far “a murderer.” And as for that jealousy which ought

to accompany this watchfulness, our apostle gives us a striking example in himself, 2 Cor. xi, 2, 3, "I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy, for I fear (*μηπως*, as here, *μηπολε*) lest by any means your minds be corrupted from the simplicity of the gospel." But doth an apostolic, or ministerial concern excuse other believers; members of churches, from a share and interest in this duty? no, doubtless, unless it renders them Cains, that is, transgressors against the light of nature; and as to the institutions of Christ, they too much manifest themselves not to be members of the same mystical body with them that really believe. For in the observation of this and the like duties of their common interest doth the preservation of that body consist. Christ is the head "from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted, by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body to the edifying of itself in love," Ephes. iv, 16. Every joint, every part in this mystical body that receives influence of life from Christ the head, and so holds of him, is to work effectually, and to give out the supplies which it receives from Christ to the preservation, increase, and edification of the whole. There is indeed a causeless suspicion that some are apt to indulge instead of this watchful jealousy; which former is the bane of churches and of love, as the latter is the preservation of them both. The apostle placeth "evil surmises," or suspicions, among the works of men of corrupt minds, 1 Tim. vi, 4, and that deservedly; but this godly watchful jealousy he commends to others in the example of himself. And whatever appearance they may have one of another, they may be easily distinguished. Holy jealousy is a solicitous care proceeding from love; sinful suspicion is a vain conjecturing, proceeding from curiosity, van-

ity, or envy. The heart of the former is ruled by love towards the persons concerned; from thence he is afraid lest they should miscarry, lest any evil should befall them; for love is the willing of all good to others, that they may prosper universally; but the suspicious is actuated by curiosity and vanity of mind; whence commonly there is somewhat of envy and secret self-pleasing in the miscarriages of others mixed with it; a fault too often found amongst professors! And this vice puts forth itself in vain babbling, and unheedful defamations; whereas the other works by love, tenderness, prayer, and mutual exhortation. Are we not concerned that an eye doth not go out, that an arm doth not wither, that a leg be not broken, yea that a finger be not cut? (*Principiis obsta.*) "Suppress the rising evil," is the great rule in these cases. And the duty we speak of is one signal means of preventing this evil. And it is the defect which is in this and the like kind of duties, which manifests and makes naked that miserable degeneracy which Christians in general, in these latter evil days, are fallen into. Who almost hath any regard to them? Instead of these fruits of spiritual love, men for the most part follow divers lusts and pleasures, living in envy and malice, hateful and hating one another. The practical duties of Christianity are amongst many derided. To watch over one another, to warn, to exhort one another, are looked on as things, if possible, beneath contempt. And it is a shame to mention the ways and means of dealing about the sins of men, which by some are instituted in the room of those appointed in the gospel.

§11. *Obs.* 3. The root of all backslidings, of all apostasies whether it be notional or practical, gradual or total, lies in unbelief. When, therefore, any heart

is said to be (*πονερα*) *evil*, a wicked flagitious frame is intended. Our present inquiry is only how the heart is gradually brought under this denomination by the power and efficacy of unbelief; and that with special respect to that particular sin of departing from God. And this is done several ways.

(1.) Unbelief renders the heart "evil," as it sets all the corrupt lusts and affections of the heart at liberty to act according to their own perverse nature and inclination. The heart of man is by nature evil; "All the thoughts and imaginations of it are only evil continually," Gen. vi, 5. It is full of all corrupt affections. The gospel cometh in a direct opposition to those lusts and corrupt affections, both in the root and fruit of them. For this "grace of God, which bringeth salvation, hath appeared, teaching us that denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world," 2 Tit. ii, 13. It is the work of faith to purify the heart, being the great means or instrument whereby God is pleased to effect it; "purifying our hearts by faith," Acts xv, 9. For receiving the promises, it teacheth, persuadeth, and enableth us to cleanse ourselves from all uncleannesses of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God, 2 Cor. vii, 1. Now these two, faith and the gospel, make up our profession; and they both concur in the design of purifying the heart. "For they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts," Gal. v, 24. But now wherever unbelief beginneth to influence the heart towards the frame described, it sets in the first place these corrupt lusts and affections at liberty to act themselves according to their own nature. The way and means whereby the gospel of itself worketh towards the mortification of the lusts of the heart is by the proposal of its promises



consideration of them induceth men to set themselves against whatever may cause them to come short of the one, or make them obnoxious to the other, 2 Cor. vii, 1. Now all such gracious influence upon the soul is intercepted by unbelief; but especially it impedes and hinders faith in the work before described, by depriving it of the means and instruments whereby it works, which are care and watchfulness in opposing sin. Where this is attained the whole work of faith is defeated, and lust is set at liberty: this renders the heart "evil," and disposeth it to an utter departure from the living God.

(2.) It renders the heart "evil" by debasing it, and casting all good, honest, ingenuous, and noble principles out of it. The gospel furnisheth the mind of man with the best and highest principles towards God and man that, in this world, it is susceptible of. Whatever there is of faith, love, or submission; whatever innocency, righteousness, truth, patience, or forbearance; whatever is pure, comely, peaceable, or praiseworthy, is all taught and exhibited by the gospel. Now principles of this nature ennoble the soul, and render it good and honorable; but the work of unbelief is to cast them all out, which renders the heart base and "evil," and gives it an utter dislike of communion or intercourse with God.

(3.) It accumulates upon the heart a dreadful guilt of ingratitude against God, which before profession it was incapable of. When a person hath been brought to the knowledge of the gospel, and thereby emancipated out of darkness, and delivered from the sensuality of the world, and hath, moreover, it may be, tasted of the good word of God, and of the powers of the world to come; for such a one to draw back, to forsake the Lord and his ways, through the power of

unbelief, there is a great aggravation attending his sin, 2 Pet. ii, 21. And when once the heart is seduced by this horrible sin of ingratitude, it will prostitute itself of its own accord to all manner of abominations. And it is good for us to have this spring of all our dangers in the course of our profession continually in our eye. Here it lies, the root of it is here laid open; and if it be not continually watched against, all other endeavors to preserve ourselves blameless to the end will be in vain.

§12. *Obs. 4.* The malignity and venom of sin, is apt to hide itself under many, and even under any pretences. The subtilty and deceit of lust doth still strive to conceal the true and proper nature of sin whereunto it enticeth, or is enticed. When Naaman the Syrian would, notwithstanding his condition, abide in his idolatry, because of his secular advantage, it is but a going with his master into the house of Rimmon, and bowing there; not that he intended to have any other God, but the God of Israel, 2 Kings v, 18. Hence modern men of honor say, that if any one kill another, not with an intention to kill him, but to vindicate his honor, it is no sin, or at least no great sin, or much to be regarded. And what is this but directly to comply with the deceitfulness of sin? For none surely is so flagitiously wicked as to make the formal nature of sin their object and professed end; nor, it may be, is human nature capable of such exorbitancy; but still some other end is proposed by a corrupt design and incitation of the mind, which is blind to its wickedness.

§13. *Obs. 5.* The best way to administer to the soul an antidote against sin, is to represent it to the mind in its true nature and tendency. The hiding of these was the way whereby sin first entered into the

world; thereby did Satan draw our first parents into their transgression; hiding from them the nature and end of their sin, he ensnared and seduced them. In the same way and method doth he still proceed. This caused our apostle here to rend off the coverings and vain pretences which the Hebrews were ready to put upon their sin of relinquishing the gospel; he presents it here naked to them as a fatal defection and apostasy from the living God; and therein gives them also to understand its end, which was no other but the casting of themselves into his revenging hand to eternity. If the mind keep up itself to the true notion of the nature and end of sin, through the strength of grace its temptation will probably be evaded and disappointed. So it was with Joseph; various suggestions he had made to him, but he keeps his mind fixed on that "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" which preserved and delivered him, Gen. xxxix, 9. But if the mind be prevailed with to admit of those representations of sin, which are made to it in temptations, sin in the perpetration of it will ensue; and this will be our wisdom, that we always keep our minds possessed with a due sense of the nature and end of sin.

§14. *Obs.* 6. Whoever departs from the observation of the gospel and the institutions thereof, doth in so doing depart from the living God; or an apostate from the gospel is an absolute apostate from God. Men think it almost a matter of no account to play with gospel institutions at their pleasure; they can observe or omit them, as seems good to themselves; but (1.) in their so doing the authority of God over their souls and consciences is utterly rejected, and so consequently is God himself; for where his authority is not owned, his being is despised. Now there are various ways

whereby God puts forth and manifests his authority over men, but all of them are recapitulated in the gospel; the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son, John v, 22. Now Christ exerciseth his power and authority principally by the gospel, which is the rod of his power; Psal. xc, 2, and if this be rejected, the whole authority of God is utterly cast off. This therefore is done by all who reject, relinquish, or despise the gospel; they forsake God himself, the living God; for God is not owned where his monarchy is not owned. Let men deal so with their rulers, and try how it will be interpreted; let them pretend they acknowledge them, but reject the only way, all the ways, they have for the exercise of their authority, and it will doubtless be esteemed a revolt from them.

(2.) There is no other ways or means whereby men may yield obedience or worship to God, but by the gospel; and so no other way whereby men may express their subjection to him, or dependence upon him; and where this is not done, he is necessarily forsaken. Whatever men may pretend as to the worship of God, if it be not in the name of Christ, if it be not appointed in the gospel, it is not performed to the living God, but to an idol of their own hearts; for the only true God is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. And therefore by what act or acts soever men may design to give honor to God, and to own their dependence on him, if it be not done in Christ according to the gospel, it is all an abomination to him.

(3.) There is no other way whereby we may obtain the least encouraging intimation of the favor or good will of God towards us; no way whereby his grace may be assured to us but this only. And where there is not a sufficient ground of that, no man can abide

with God in a due manner. If men have not a stable foundation to apprehend God to be good and gracious, and willing to receive them, they will no otherwise respect or esteem him, but as the poor Indians do the devil, whom they worship that he may do them no harm.

(4.) There is no other way wherein we may look for a reward from God, or hope to come to the enjoyment of him, but only by the gospel. And this also is necessary that we may honor him as God, as "the living God." This is the end for which we were made, and if we leave the pursuit of it, we cast off all regard to God. And this will discover the great multitude of practical atheists that are in the world. Many there are who have been educated in gospel principles, and some who have been brought under great conviction, who yet, by the power of their lusts and temptations, come to renounce and despise all the institutions, ordinances, and worship of the gospel; and consequently the Author of it himself: for it is a vain thing to pretend love or honor to Christ, and not to keep his commandments. They would not however be reckoned among atheists, for they still acknowledge the one God; but herein they industriously deceive their own souls. Then they forsake the living God, when they forsake the gospel of his Son. And let us all know what reverence becomes us in the things of the gospel; God is in them, even the living God; his name, his authority, his grace, is enstamped on them all.

## VERSE 13.

*But exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.*

§1, 2. (I.) The words explained. The duty to exhort. §3. The season and manner. §4. The limitation of the season. §5. The persons concerned. §6, 7. (II.) Observation. Mutual exhortation, an eminent means to prevent the deceitful workings of sin. §8. Other observations.

§1. **H**ERE lies one means of preventing the evil mentioned in the foregoing verse; and we have in it the duty itself—the manner and season of its performance—with a limitation of that season—and a special enforcement from the dangers of its neglect, as we shall see in our opening of the words. We shall therefore,

*First*, Explain these particulars included in the verse; and,

*Secondly*; Raise some profitable observations from them.

§2. (I.) The duty intended is expressed in the first word (*παρακαλεῖτε*;) the first and principal signification of which is to exhort, to desire, to call in, and so it is almost constantly used in Greek authors; and secondarily, only “to comfort.” But there is a near affinity between these things; for the way of administering consolation is by exhortation, 1 Thes. iv, 18. “Comfort you one another with these words,” (*παρακαλεῖτε ἀλλήλους*) that is, exhorting and persuading one another by these words, administer to each other mutual consolation. And all exhortation ought to be only by consolatory words and ways, to render it acceptable and so effectual. So it is observed of Barnabas, who was a son of consolation, that he had also a great excellency in exhorting, Acts xi, 23, 24, “When Barnabas came and had seen the grace of God, he exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would

cleave to the Lord; for he was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith." The word intimates a very prevalent way of exhorting in Barnabas; and that because he was (*αγαθός*) "a good man;" not in the ordinary sense, a holy, just man, but one that was benign, kind, condescending; apt to comfort and refresh. The Greek term, (*παρακαλεῖν*) "to exhort," therefore, is to persuade with good, meek, and comfortable words, upon grounds of consolation, and to the end that men may be comforted. This is incumbent on some by virtue of office, Rom. viii, 12, "he that exhorteth, on exhortation," as well as on all believers.

§3. The season of the performance of this duty is adjoined, which includeth also the manner of it: (*καθ' ἑκάστην ἡμέραν*) *Daily*, say we, or *every day*. A day is often taken for a season; and to do a thing "daily," is to do it in its season; and moreover to do it sedulously and heedfully. Two things are plainly intended; First, a constant readiness of mind, inclining, inducing, and preparing any one for the discharge of this duty; Secondly, an actual discharge of it on all just occasions, which are to be watched for and willingly embraced. And this the Hebrews now stood in special need of, because of the manifold temptations and seductions wherewith they were exercised.

§4. Hereunto is added a limitation of the season of this duty as to its continuance, "whilst it is called to-day;" that is, be sedulous in the discharge of this duty, whilst the season of it continues. The apostle now gives the Hebrews to understand, that the great day, or promised season, shadowed to their forefathers, was now really and actually come upon them. It was justly called "to-day," with them whilst they enjoyed the gospel; for the apostle saw that their season was

almost ready to expire; and, indeed, it continued but a few years after the writing of this epistle. This he secretly minds them of, and withal exhorts them to improve their present advantages, especially in the discharge of the great duty of mutual exhortation, that so they might prevent the great evil of departing from the living God, and, as tending thereunto, the hardening of their hearts, through the deceitfulness of sin.

§5. We have next the persons concerned, (*τις εξ υμων*) *any of you*; any one that is of your society, engaged in the same profession, and partaker of the same privileges. Herein, we see, the apostle extends his direction to mutual watchfulness and exhortation unto all; even the meanest of the church. Again; the spring or cause of the evil to be feared from the intimated neglect is sin, (*αμαρτια*) a general name for all or any sin; our apostle constantly useth it to express original sin, the sin of our nature, the root on which all other sins grow, which is here intended; the sin that by nature dwelleth in us, that is, present with us, when we would do good, to hinder us; and is continually working to put forth its venomous nature in actual transgressions. This he calls elsewhere, a “root of bitterness,” that springs up to defilement, chap. xii, 15. Moreover, the ways and means, whereby this sin worketh, is by deceit, (*τη απαιη της αμαρτιας.*) The word (*απαιη*) here rendered “deceit,” signifies both the faculty of deceiving, the artifice used in deceiving, and actual deceit, or deceiving itself. The evil itself particularly cautioned against is expressed in that word (*σκληρυνθη*) “should be *hardened*,” of the sense and import of which we have spoken fully on the foregoing verses.



§6. (II.) *Obs.* 1. Sedulous mutual exhortation is an eminent means to prevent the deceitful workings of sin. There are many practical duties neglected because they are not understood, and they are not understood, because they are supposed to have no difficulty in them. High notions, curious speculations, with knotty controversies, are thought to deserve men's utmost diligence in their search and examination; but for these practical duties it is generally supposed that they are known sufficiently at a word's speaking, if they were but practised accordingly. Yet it will be found that the great wisdom of faith consists in a spiritual acquaintance with the true nature of these duties; which indeed are therefore practically neglected, because they are not doctrinally understood. The duty of constant exhortation, that is, of persuading the souls of men to constancy and growth in faith and obedience, to watchfulness and diligence against the deceitfulness of sin, from the word of truth, in the name and authority of Christ, is the most important part of the ministerial office. But there is also an exhortation, which is mutual among believers, founded in their common interest, and proceeding from special-love wrought in them by the spirit of Christ, and required in them by the law of Christ.

§7. This is the duty immediately intended, and to the right performance of it, the following things appertain:

1. That they who are engaged in it, find in themselves an especial concernment in the persons with whom, and the things about which they treat in their exhortations. It will not admit of that pragmatistical curiosity which leads men to interpose themselves in matters wherein they are no way concerned. If men find not themselves concerned in the glory of God,

and their hearts moved with compassion towards the souls of men, whether they are in church office or not, it will be their wisdom to abstain from this work, as that which they are no way fitted to discharge.

2. A special warranty for the particular exercise of this duty is required of us. Now this ariseth from a due coincidence of rule and circumstances; add to the right rule a due consideration of circumstances relating to times, seasons, persons, and occasions, and it will ratify the warranty intended.

3. Special wisdom, understanding, and ability are required. It is an easy thing to spoil the best duty in the manner of its performance, and especially a defect in spiritual skill; for if men have not a sound judgment and understanding of the matter about which this mutual exhortation is to be exercised, and of the way whereby it is to be managed, they may do well to leave it to them who are better qualified to speak a word in season, I mean as to the solemn discharge of it; otherwise occasional mutual encouragements to faith and obedience are the common and constant duties of all believers.

4. That it be done with words of truth. It is truth alone that in things of this nature is attended with authority and good effect; for if there be any failure in this foundation, the whole superstructure will sink of itself.

5. That it may be managed, unless peculiar circumstances require some variation, with good and comfortable words, words of consolation and encouragement. The word here used, as hath been shewed, signifies to comfort, as well as to exhort. Morose, severe expressions become not this duty; but such as wisdom will draw out from love, care, tenderness, compassion, and the like compliant affections. These open

and soften the heart and make the entrance into it smooth and easy.

6. That it be carefully and diligently accompanied with a suitable example in the practice of the persons exhorting. An observation of the contrary will quickly frustrate the weightiest words that look another way. Christian exhortation is nothing but an encouragement given to others to walk with us, or after us, in the ways of God; "Be followers of me," saith our apostle, "as I am of Christ."

§8. To the above more general observations, we may add the following ones:

1. Gospel duties have an especial efficacy attending them in their special seasons. "Whilst it is called to-day." Every thing hath its beauty, order, and efficacy from its proper season. Again,

2. We have but an uncertain season for the due performance of most certain duties. How long it will be called "to-day," we know not; the day of our lives is uncertain; so is the day of the gospel, as also of our opportunities; the present season alone is ours; and for the most part, we need no other reason to prove any time to be a season for duty, but because it is present.

3. The deceit which is in sin, and which is inseparable from it, tends continually to harden the heart. This is principally taught us in these words, and is a truth of great importance.

## VERSE 14.

*For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.*

§1—3. (I.) The words explained. §4. (II) Observations, 1. Union with Christ is the principle and measure of all spiritual enjoyments and expectations §5. 2. Stedfastness in believing is the great evidence of union with Christ. §6. 7. Our subsistence in Christ maintained to the end, is matter of great endeavor and diligence.

§1. **I**N these words the apostle lets us know, that all our interest in Christ, and all the benefits we expect or may be made partakers of by him, depend upon our answering his exhortation to constancy and perseverance in our profession. And moreover, that whereas men are apt to wax weary and faint, or to grow slothful in the course of their profession, sometimes so soon almost as they entered upon it, unless they continue the same diligence and earnestness of endeavors as at the first, so as to abide stedfast to the end, they would have no benefit either by Christ or the gospel, but rather fall assuredly under that indignation of God which he had newly warned them of.

§2. (II.) “We are made partakers of Christ,” (*γεννημαμεν*) “We have been made;” a present state is here denoted, that which is already wrought; and indeed the due consideration of this word doth rightly state the relation of the several parts of the passage. “We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence,” that is, thereby are we so interpretatively and declaratively. Our perseverance is enjoined as an evidence of our participation of Christ; that whereby it may be tried whether it be true and genuine, which if it be, it will be producing this effect. As James requires that we should try our evidence, and manifest our faith by our works, of what sort it is. We are made (*μετοχοι Χριστου*) “partakers of Christ.”

Most expositors suppose the name "Christ" to be here taken metonymically, for the benefits of his mediation, in grace here, and right to future blessedness; some suppose it to be only an expression of being a disciple of Christ, and so really to belong to him; but the true and precise import of the words may be learned from the apostle himself, in his use of those of a similar signification, with reference to Christ himself. Chap. ii, 14, "Because the children were partakers of flesh and blood;" he was partaker of us; how? By taking flesh and blood, that is, entire human nature. How then are we partakers of Christ? It is by our having an interest in his nature, by the communication of his Spirit, as he had in ours by the assumption of our flesh. He and we are made one, he the head, we the body; co-heirs and incorporated with him. We are "one body with him, as he speaks, of his flesh and bones." "If we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end."

§3. Some by (*την αρχην της υποστασεως*) the phrase here rendered, "the beginning of our confidence," understand the gospel; some faith, some hope, some confidence, some Christ himself; but there seems yet to me another more genuine sense of the words suited to the scope of the place, and design of the apostle, without wresting it from its native signification. We have shewed, that our partaking of Christ is our being united to him, and the (*υποστασις*) hypostasis, which on that union we are bound to preserve and maintain, is our subsistence in Christ, our abiding in him, as the branches in the vine; so the word very properly signifies, and so it is here emphatically used. (*Την αρχην*) "the beginning," is plainly here an adjunct of our subsistence in Christ: the beginning of our engagements to Christ is for the most part accompanied with much

love, and other choice affections, resolution and courage, which, without great care and watchfulness, we are very ready to decay in, and fall from.

§4. (II.) *Obs.* 1. Union with Christ is the principle and measure of all spiritual enjoyments and expectations. The apostle sums up all, both what we enjoy by the gospel at present, and what expectation we have of future blessedness, in this one phrase, "We are partakers of Christ." The propriety of the observation will plainly appear if we consider,

(1.) That this union is itself the first truly saving mercy, in the order of nature; the first vital grace we are made partakers of. And that which is the first of any kind, is the measure and rule of all that ensues in that kind. As is the root, so are the branches and the fruit; they do not only follow the nature of it, but live upon its supplies. All our grace is but a participation of the root, and therein of the fatness of the olive tree; and we bear not the root, but the root bears us, Rom. xi, 17, 18. Whatever precedes this, is not true saving grace; and whatever follows it proceeds from it: Christ as savingly bestowed, is the spring and fountain of all grace whatever. Now our union with Christ, our participation of him, consists in the habitation of the same spirit in him and us; and the first work of this spirit bestowed upon us, is to form Christ in us, whereby our union is completed. God doth not first create a soul, giving it an existence of its own, without union with the body; but creates it in and by its infusion: so the spirit doth not first come to us, and afterward quicken or sanctify us; but he doth this by his coming to us, and possessing our hearts with Christ. This the apostle calls the "forming of Christ in us," Gal. iv, 19. He that is in Christ Jesus is a

new creature, 2 Cor. v, 17; and this is Christ in us the hope of glory, Col. i, 27.

(2.) It is the first in dignity; it is the greatest, most honorable and glorious of all graces we are made partakers of. The greatest humiliation of the Son of God consisted in his taking upon him our nature; and on the contrary, our grace of union with Christ, our participation of him, and his nature, is our highest exaltation. He became poor for our sakes, by a participation of our nature; that we through his poverty may be rich in a participation of his nature. Being once made co-heirs with Christ, we are made heirs of God, and have a right to the whole inheritance; and indeed what greater glory or dignity can a poor sinner be exalted to, than to be thus intimately and indissolubly united to the Son of God?

(3.) It is the first and principal grace, in respect of causality and efficacy. It is the cause of all other graces that we are made partakers of; they are all communicated to us by virtue of our union with Christ. Hence is our adoption, our justification, our sanctification, our perseverance, our fruitfulness, our resurrection, our glory.

§5. *Obs. 2.* Constancy and stedfastness in believing, is the great touchstone and evidence of union with Christ, or a participation of him. It is enduring faith, that is true faith, and which proves us indeed to be partakers of Christ. Here take notice,

(1.) That there are many seeming evidences of union with Christ that may fail. The blade is an appearing evidence of well-rooted corn, but it often fails, and that for want of root, Matt. xiii, 12. Things of this nature may satisfy them in whom they are, that they are really united in Christ; but this they conclude through their own darkness and mistakes. And some-

times there are signs, and which yet are but failing signs, such as others may, nay ought to be satisfied in, as not being able to evince them to be otherwise, by any rule of truth.

(2.) There may be certain and undeceiving evidences of a present participation of Christ, or, which is all one, men may have a certainty, sufficient at present to support and comfort them in their obedience; and which in the issue will neither fail them, nor make them ashamed, that they are partakers of Christ. Now faith is that which gives subsistence to the things believed in our minds, and is such an argument of them as will not deceive; and nothing can possibly give the mind a more undeceiving assurance than that which causeth its object to subsist in it, which unites the mind and the truth believed in one subsistence. This faith doth. Hence our apostle ascribes to it, Ephes. iii, 12, a grounded boldness, with a confident trust, which are the highest expressions of the mind's assurance. It is then in the nature of faith itself rightly exercised and improved, to evince this matter to our souls; and when the holy Spirit giveth this new name of a child of God to any believer, he knows it though others understand it not, Rev. ii, 17. Hence we are said to receive the Spirit of God; that we may know the things which are freely given us of God: 1 Cor. ii, 12. Our apostle declares in the name of all believers, Rom. viii, 38, 39. "I am persuaded," saith he, "that nothing shall separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." And so the apostle John tells us, that we both "perceive the love of God towards us," and that we "know that we are passed from death to life;" 1 Epist. iii, 14—16, both which depend on our union with Christ, and which by them is made evident and sure to us. This is also confirmed to us from the *na-*



*ture and use of the sacraments*; and if we may not, if we *ought* not to rest assured of what God testifies and sets his *seal* to, it cannot but be our duty sometimes, (shocking supposition) to make God a liar; for so we do when we believe not his testimony, 1 John v, 10. But to prevent any hesitation in this matter, he hath not left it under a bare testimony, but hath also confirmed it by his *oath*; and to this very end, that we might have strong consolation; which, without an *undeceiving assurance*, we cannot obtain, Heb. vi, 17, 18.

(3.) No grace, no sign or mark will any longer, or any further, be an evidence or testimony in this matter, but only as the soul is effectually *influenced to perseverance*. If any grace whatever once lose its efficacy upon the soul, to all such acts of obedience as are required for constancy, and persevering fidelity in our profession, it loseth all its evidencing power, as to our present state and condition: for instance; faith, as to the nature of it, and as to its main effect, our adherence to Christ, may abide in us, when yet by reason of the power of temptation, or prevalency of corruption, it may not act effectually to spiritual experience, for the constant performance of duties, and abstinence from all sin; but when it doth so fail, it can no longer *evidence* our union with Christ, and the soul, in that case, will be left to many disquietments and uncertainties.

(4.) Our perseverance is an evidence of union, in that it is an *effect* of it, and there is a good demonstration of a cause from its proper and peculiar effect. Where an effect is produced that cannot be wrought but by such a cause, the latter is infallibly manifested by the former; as the magicians concluded from the miracles of Moses, that the finger of God was in them. Besides, this perseverance is the due issue and exurgency of grace constantly exercised and improved; and all

growth in grace, in what kind soever it be, is at once an emanation from this one fountain of our union with Christ, and its most corroborating evidence.

(5.) This also may be added, whatever profession hath been made, whatever fruits of it have been brought forth, whatever continuance in it there hath been, if it fail totally, it is a sufficient evidence that those who have made it, were never "partakers of Christ." So our apostle, having declared, that some of great name had apostatized from the gospel, adds, that yet "the foundation of God standeth sure," that God knoweth who are his, 2 Tim. ii, 17—19, manifesting, that those who fell off, notwithstanding their profession and eminence, were never yet owned of God as his in Christ. And another apostle tells us, that those who went out from them by a defection from the faith, were in truth not of them, or really united to Christ. John ii, 19. And where there are partial decays in faith and profession, it gives great ground of suspicion and jealousy, that the root of bitterness is yet remaining in the heart, and that Christ was never formed in it. Let not men, therefore, please themselves in their present attainments and conditions, unless they find that they are thriving, growing, passing on towards perfection, which is the best evidence of their union with Christ.

§6. *Obs.* 3. Our subsistence in Christ maintained to the end, is a matter of great endeavour and diligence to all believers. This is plainly included in the apostle's expression. The words denote our utmost endeavours to hold it fast, and to keep it firm and steadfast. Shaken it will be, opposed it will be; but kept it will not, it cannot be, without our utmost diligence and endeavours. It is true, our persistency in Christ doth not as to the event, depend absolutely on our

own diligence; the unalterableness of this privilege, on account of the faithfulness of the covenant of grace, is that which eventually secures it; but yet our own diligent endeavour is such an indispensable means for that end, as that without it, it will not be brought about. For it is necessary, not only (*necessitate præcepti*,) as that which God hath commanded us to make use of for that end, but also (*necessitate medii*) by a necessity of means, or the order and relation of spiritual things one to another, ordained of God to effect it. For the continuation of our subsistence in Christ is the emergency and effect of our acting grace to that purpose. Diligence and endeavours in this matter are like Paul's mariners, when he was shipwrecked at Melita; God had beforehand given him the lives of all that sailed with him in the ship; Acts xxvii, 24; and he believed that it should be even as God told him, verse 25; so now the preservation of their lives depends absolutely on the faithfulness and power of God; but yet when the mariners began to fly out of the ship, Paul tells the centurion and the soldiers, that unless those men staid, they could not be saved, verse 31. But what need he think of shipmen, when God had promised and taken upon himself the preservation of them all? He knew full well that he would preserve them, not without, but by the use of means. If we are in Christ, God hath given us the lives of our souls, and hath taken upon himself in his covenant the preservation of them; but yet we may say with reference to the means he hath appointed, when storms and trials arise, unless we use our own diligent endeavours, we "cannot be saved." Hence are many cautions given us, "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall;" and, "take heed that we lose not the things which we have wrought," and "hold fast

that thou hast, lest another take thy crown;" with the like innumerable.

§7. These warnings are not given merely to professors in general, whose condition is dubious, to those that are only entering on the ways of Christ, lest they should recoil and desert them; but they are given to all true believers, those of the greatest growth and attainments not excepted, Phil. iii, 11—13; that they may know how indispensably necessary, from the appointment of God, and the nature of the thing itself, our watchful diligence and endeavours are to our abiding in Christ. And they are thus necessary,

1. On account of the opposition, power, and craft of our spiritual adversaries. For this end are the gates of hell, that is, the counsel and strength of Satan, peculiarly engaged. His great design is to cast them down and prevail against them who are built upon the rock; that is, who are united to Christ. Our Savior, indeed, hath promised, "that he shall not prevail," Matt. xvi, 15; but that he shall not prevail, argues a disappointment in contest; but we are to watch and contend that they may not. This also is the principal design of the world; it sets all its engines on work to separate us from Christ.

2. It is necessary on account of our peace, consolation, and fruitfulness in this world. Without the two former, we have no satisfaction in ourselves, and without the latter, we are of no use to the glory of God, or good of others. It is altogether vain to expect true peace, solid consolation, or a thriving in fruitfulness, in a slothful profession. Men complain of the fruit, but will not be persuaded to dig at the root; for all our spiritual troubles, darkness, disconsolations, fears, doubts, barrenness, proceed from this bitter root of negligence, which springs up and defiles us. Sin's

whole design is to impair or destroy our interest and persistency in Christ, and so to draw us off from the living God. Neglected grace will wither, and be ready to die, Rev. iii, 2; yea, as to some degrees of it, and as to its work in evidencing the love of God to us, or our union with Christ, it will utterly decay. Some of the churches in the Revelation had lost their first love, as well as left their first works. Hence is that command that we should “grow in grace,” and we do so, when grace grows and thrives in us. And is it any wonder if we see so many either decaying or unthrifty professors, and so many that are utterly turned off from their first engagements? For consider what it is to abide in Christ; what watchfulness, what diligence, what endeavors are required. Men would have it to be a plant that needs neither watering, manuring, nor pruning, but that which will thrive of itself; but, what then do they think of the opposition that is continually made to it, the endeavors that are used utterly to root it out? Certainly, if these be not watched against with our utmost industry, decays, if not ruin will ensue. We may also add here, that not only our profession and existence in Christ, but the gracious beginnings of it also, are to be secured with great spiritual care and industry.

## VERSES 15----19.

*While it is said, to day if ye will hear his voice harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. For some, when they heard did provoke; howbeit not all that came out of Egyft by Moses. But with whom was he grieved forty years? Was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not. So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.*

§1--7. (I.) The several clauses of the passage explained. §8, 9. (II.) Observations. 1. Every circumstance of holy scripture is instructive. §10. 2. Many hear the voice of God to no profit. §11, 12. 3. In the most general apostasies God reserves a remnant for himself. §13. 4. God is not displeased with any thing in his people but sin. §14, 15. 5. God sometimes inflicts on exemplary sinners, exemplary punishments. §16. 6. Great destructions by way of judgment, are instituted representations of future vengeance. §17. 7. All unbelief is accompanied with contumacy. §18, 8. Unbelief justifies the severity of God. §19--21. 9. The oath of God is engaged against no sin but unbelief.

§1. (I.) **T**HE genuine sense and proper contexture of the apostle's discourse require their connexion with what went before. The introduction is, "whilst it is said;" the words therefore are to be taken simply and absolutely, so as to indicate a repetition of the former testimony, and its improvement to some farther ends and purposes. (Εν το λεγεσθαι) "*whereas it is said;*" whereas these words are used in the psalmist, and are recorded for our instruction. And herein the apostle intends not only the repetition of the precise words, but by them calls over again the whole story that depends upon them, which is usual in such quotations. Out of the whole, he intends now to take new observations to his purpose; as if he had said, consider what hath been spoken, that the same befall not you, as did them who provoked and perished.

§2. They all came out of Egypt, they all heard the voice of God; howbeit all did not provoke, but only some. (Δια Μοσεως) *By Moses*, that is, either under his conduct and guidance, or through the prevalency of the miraculous work which God wrought by him. Both these senses the prophet expresseth, Isa. lxiii, 11, 12; "Then he remembered the days of old, Moses and his people, saying, Where is he that brought them up out of the sea, with the shepherd of his flock? Where is he that put his Holy Spirit within him? That led him by the right hand of Moses with his glorious arm, dividing the water before them, to make himself an everlasting name." This also is

ascribed to them, that “they heard.” And this may be taken either strictly, for the hearing of the voice of God at the giving of the law on mount Sinai, when the whole congregation heard those voices of God in thundering and dreadful agitations of the mount wherewith it was accompanied; or it may be taken more largely for a participation in all those instructions which God granted them in the wilderness. There seems, indeed, to be a special respect to the giving of the law; not merely the promulgation of the ten words on Sinai, but the whole system of attendant precepts and ordinances of worship; for therein they were evangelized even as we, chap. iv, 2. Also their “hearing” is spoken of as that which was past; “When they had heard,” before their provoking, which yet signally happened in the second year after their coming out of Egypt. What they heard then was the voice of God; and their sin was that (*παρεπίσησαν*) they provoked; that is, God, whose voice they heard. Hos. xii, 13, “Ephraim hath provoked bitterness;” that is, very bitterly. Great provocations have a bitterness in them, as the word here denotes, which causeth God to loath the provokers. By these considerations doth the apostle enforce his exhortations; for, saith he, when the people of old heard the voice of God in that dispensation of his law and grace, which was suited to their condition, some of them provoked God; and whereas, they may do so also who hear his voice in the dispensation of the gospel, therefore doth it highly concern them to take care; for, under every dispensation, dreadful is the event of abused mercy.

§3. The apostle adds expressly a limitation, with respect to the persons who heard and provoked; ‘howbeit not all.’ In his preceding discourse he had expressed the sin and punishment of the people indefi-

nately, so as at first view to include the whole generation in the wilderness; here he puts in an exception, which may refer to three sorts of persons: First, those who were under twenty years of age, not being numbered in the wilderness of Sinai, in the second year after their coming out of Egypt, Num. i, 1—3. For of those that were then numbered, there was not a man left save Caleb and Joshua, when the people were again numbered in the plains of Moab by Moses and Eleazer, chap. xxvi, 63, 64, but those who were numbered, were they who died, because of their provocation. Secondly, the tribe of Levi; for, as now observed, the threatening and oath of God was against all of them only that were numbered in the wilderness of Sinai; Num. xiv, 29. And Moses was expressly commanded in the taking of the first muster-roll not to take the number of the Levites, chap. i, 47, 48, 49. However, I much fear, by the course of the story, that the generality of this tribe fell also. Thirdly, Caleb and Joshua; and it is certain that these are principally intended. The apostle expresseth the limitation of his former general assertion, that he might enforce his exhortation with the example of them who believed and obeyed the voice of God, and who thereon enjoyed the promise, and entered into his rest; as well as those who provoked. So that he takes his argument not only from the severity of God, which at first view seems only to be represented in this instance, but also from his implied faithfulness and grace.

§4. The apostle's language, though in form of speech an interrogation, is in reality a strong answer. The answer to this first inquiry, 'But with whom was he angry forty years?' consists in a double description of them, first by their sin; Was it not with them that sinned? Secondly, by their punishment; 'Whose car-



casses fell in the wilderness.’ And we may consider, both what is included, and then what is expressed, in this answer. It is plainly included that God was not thus displeased with them all; let not any apprehend that God took a causeless distaste at that whole generation, and so cast them off and destroyed them promiscuously. As they were some only, and not all, that provoked; so it was with some only, and not all, that God was displeased. With those who sinned not, who provoked not, God was not displeased, but according to his promise they entered into his rest; which promise in a more excellent sense still remains for the benefit of this present generation of them, if they were not disobedient. The first thing expressed in the words, or the first part of the description of them with whom God was displeased, is their sin; ‘was it not with them that sinned?’ The ‘sins’ here principally intended, are the general sins of the whole congregation, which consisted in their frequent murmurings and rebellions, which came to an head as it were in that great provocation upon the return of the spies, Num. xiv, when they not only provoked God by their own unbelief, but encouraged one another to destroy these two persons, Joshua and Caleb, who would not concur in their disobedience; ‘All the congregation bade stone them with stones,’ ver. 10. This distinction was observed by the daughters of Zelophehad, in their address for an inheritance among their brethren; ‘Our father, say they, died in the wilderness, and he was not in the company of them that gathered themselves together against the Lord, in the company of Corah, but died in his own sin,’ Num. xxvii, 3. They acknowledge him guilty of personal sins, and deny not but that he joined in the general provocation of the whole congregation; but only that he

had no hand in those special provocations, which God fixed an eminent mark of his displeasure upon, by cutting off the provokers with fearful, sudden, and signal judgments; whereas others were gradually consumed by death in a natural way.

§5. The apostle describes them next by their punishment. ‘Whose carcasses fell in the wilderness.’ I suppose the (פגריים) ‘Carcasses’ of the people may here be called their (κωλα) *members*, or their bones, as SURIDAS renders the word, because probably in those great plagues and destructions that befel them, their rebellious carcasses, at least many of them, were left on the ground in the wilderness, where, after the most perishable parts were consumed, their greater bones lay scattered up and down. So the psalmist complains, that it befel them at another season, Psalm cxli, 7. ‘Our bones are scattered at the grave’s mouth, as when one cutteth and cleaveth wood on the earth.’ A sore destruction, or judgment, this is accounted amongst men; and therefore is it made a representation of hell, Isa. lxvi, 24. ‘They shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.’ Their carcasses (επεσον) *fell*, that is, *pœnally*; which is an aggravation of their destruction. He doth not say, they died; but “their carcasses fell,” which intimates contempt and indignation.

§6. ‘Was it not with them who believed not?’ (τοις απειθησασι;) this word as before shewn, is variously rendered; obeyed not, believed not, assented not, acquiesced not. The original verb (πειθω) is to *persuade*, by words or any other means; and the word compounded (απειθεω) is properly not to be persuaded, or not to do what the persuasion leads to; and if that persuasion be

with authority, the dissent is disobedience, or contumacy; and these are varied according as the persuasion hath been proposed. The Greek noun (*απειθεια*) is usually disobedience, stubbornness, or rebellion; but in the New Testament it is often rendered by unbelief, Rom. xi, 30—32. Heb. iv, 11. and, indeed, the word (*πιστις*) *faith* itself, is from (*πειθω*) to *persuade*. And in other authors (*πιστις*) *faith* is nothing but that persuasion of mind which is begotten by arguments proposed; but the promiscuous rendering of that word by either disobedience or unbelief, seeing these formally differ, is not so safe, and ought to be reduced to some certain rule. This, for ought I can perceive, interpreters have not done, but have indifferently rendered it, by the one word or the other. The two words (*απειθεια* and *απειθεω*) do certainly denote a denial of the proper effect of the primitive (*πειθω*) the effect of *persuasion* is not produced. Now this persuasion is not merely and solely an exhortation by words; but whatever hath a moral tendency to prevail with the mind of man to do or not to do any thing, hath the virtue of a persuasion. Thus in commands, in promises, in threatenings, there is a persuasion; and is common to them all, that they are suited to prevail with the minds of men, to do or not to do the things which they respect. But there is some peculiar adjunct whereby they are distinguished as to their persuasive efficacy; as authority in commands, faithfulness in promises, severity in threatenings, power and holiness in all. Look then in any place what is the formal reason of the persuasion whose disappointment is expressed by the terms in question, and we shall understand what it is that primarily and directly is intended by them. That whereby we answer a 'command' is obedience, because of the authority wherewith it is

attended, and our not being persuaded or prevailed on thereby is disobedience; that whereby we answer a 'promise' is faith, trust, or believing, and our failing herein is unbelief. Not that these things can be so separated, as though we could obey and not believe or believe and not obey; but yet they are thus properly distinguished. Wherever then these expressions occur, we must consider whether they directly express the neglect of the command of God, or of his promise; if it be of the former, they are duly rendered by disobeying and disobedience; if the latter, by unbelief, incredulity, and the like. As in this place their crime (*απειθεια*) principally respected the promise of God to give them the land of Canaan, and his power to effect it; so that unbelief is primarily and principally intended; they would not believe, that he would or could bring them into that land. But yet, because they were also under the command of God to go up and possess it, their unbelief was accompanied with disobedience and rebellion. This then is the meaning; 'To whom did he swear, that they should not enter into his rest?' It was then who notwithstanding a promise of it being made to them, and a command given that they should be ready to go up and possess it would not acquiesce in the faithfulness and power of God, believed not his word, and thereupon yielded not obedience to his commands; and this was sufficient both to provoke, and justify the severity of God against them, in his oath and the execution of it.

§7. So we see that they could not enter in because of "unbelief;" (*και βλεπομεν*) *and we see*; that is, it is evident from what hath been laid down and proved; or, this we have evinced, and given as it were an ocular demonstration of it. The apostle doth not only declare the fact and event, "they did not enter;" but

the right and equity also, in a negation, (*ἐκ ἡδυνήθησαν*) “they could not enter;” that is, they lost all right to enter, by virtue of any promise of God. Whatever desire they had so to do, as they manifested their desires by their murmurings, at the heavy tidings brought them by Moses concerning their exclusion, Numb. xiv, 39. Whatever attempts they made for that end; having lost all right to the promise, “They could not enter.” He sware they should not enter into his rest, and his determination is the rule of our right. “Because of unbelief.” In looking over the whole story of the sins of the people, and of God’s dealing with them, one would be apt to fix upon other causes of their exclusion from the rest of God, as the Jews their posterity do to this day. Might not they say; It was because of their idolatry in making the golden calf, which became a reproach to them in all ages? Hence the Jews have a saying, “that no trouble befalleth Israel, but there is in it an ounce of the golden calf.” Or they may think the cause of it was their abominable mixture of all sorts of sins, in their conjunction with the Midianites and Moabites, worshipping Baal-peor, eating the sacrifices of the dead, and giving themselves up to uncleanness. Their frequent murmurings also would occur to their minds. But our apostle lays it absolutely and wholly on their unbelief, and evidently proves it to have been the spring and cause of all. A sin it is that men are very unapt to charge themselves with, and yet a sin which above all others is charged on them by God.

§8. (II.) *Obs.* 1. Every circumstance of holy scripture is instructive. God hath filled his own word with truth; whence one said well, (*adoro plenitudinem scripturarum*) “I reverence the fulness of the scriptures.” Psal. cxxxviii, 2, ‘He hath magnified his

word above all his name, or made it more instructive than any other way, or means whereby he hath revealed himself." Psal. cxix, 18, "Open thou mine eyes," saith the psalmist, "that I may behold wonderful things out of thy law." There are wonderful things in the word, if God be pleased to give us light to see it; it is like a cabinet of jewels, that when you pull out one box or drawer, and search into it, you find it full; pull out another it is full; and when you think you have pulled out all, yet still there are some secret recesses in the cabinet, that if you search farther, you will find more. Our apostle seemed to have drawn out all the boxes of this cabinet; but making a second search into the words, he finds all these things treasured up, which he had not before touched upon. It was said by some of old, that 'the scripture hath fords where a lamb may wade, and depths where an elephant may swim.' Let any lamb of Christ, the weakest christian, come to the sacred oracles with due reverence, and he will find no place so dark or difficult, but will yield him some benefit; and let the wisest, the most learned and experienced person, that seems like an elephant in spiritual skill and strength amongst the flock, come to the plainest place to search out the mind and will of God in it, if he be humble as well as learned, (which if he be not he is not wise) he will scarce boast that he hath been at the bottom of it, and hath perfectly comprehended all that is in it; seeing whatever we know, we know but in part. When a learned man and one mighty in the Scriptures, undertakes the consideration of a place of scripture, and finds, it may be, in the issue, that with all his skill and industry, with all his helps and advantages, though attended in the use of them with fervent prayer and holy meditation, that he is not able to search it out

unto perfection; let him not suppose that such a place will be of no advantage to them who are not sharers in his greater advantages; for they may obtain a profitable portion for themselves, where he cannot take down all. If any one look on this river of God, like Behemoth on Jordan, trusting that he can draw it up into his mouth, or take up the whole sense of God in it, he of all others seems to know nothing of its worth and excellency.

Some think that it belongs to the fulness of the scripture, that each place in it should have various senses, some say three, some four; but this, in fact, is to empty it of all fulness; for if it have not every where one proper determinate sense, it hath none at all. But the things which the words of it are signs of, and expressed by, are so great, deep, and mysterious, and have such various respects to our light, faith, and obedience, as that it is unsearchably instructive: the commandment is exceeding broad, Psalm cxix, 96. The word used to express the wideness of the sea, Psalm civ, 25, the great sea that hath wide and large arms, which it stretcheth out to comprehend the whole earth. Hence we may observe, that in the quotations of testimonies out of the Old Testament in the New, it is very seldom that the principal aim and intendment of any place is insisted on, but rather some peculiar speciality that is either truly included in the words, or duly educed from them, by just consequence.

§9. And this may teach men what diligence they ought to use in searching and studying the scriptures; especially is this incumbent on them, whose duty and office it is to declare and expound them to others. And there is amongst many, both of a public and private character, a great miscarriage in these things: some men preach with very little regard to the scripture,

either as to the treasury of the truth they dispense, or as the rule whereby they should proceed; and some are ready to coin notions in their own minds, or to learn them from others, and then attempt to put them upon the scripture. This is the way of men who invent and propagate false opinions and groundless curiosities, which a previous reverential observance of the word might have delivered them from. Some again (and those, alas! too many) superficially take up with that sense of the words which most obviously presents itself to their first consideration, which they improve to their own purposes as they see cause; but such persons as these see little of the wisdom of God in the word; they enter not into those mines of gold; they are but passengers; they do not stand in the counsel of God to hear his word, Jerem. xxiii, 22. But it is humble diligence, joined with prayer and meditation in the study of the scriptures, that I would press after. What I would particularly urge from these considerations, grounded on the precedent before us, wherein the apostle, from sundry latent circumstances of the text draws out singularly useful observations in reference to faith and obedience, is, that our utmost diligence, especially in them who are called to instruct others, is required in this neglected, yea despised work of searching the scriptures. How often do sundry teachers design their subjects and project the handling of them, and occasionally only take in the words of scripture; guided more by the sound than the sense of them! And, which is worst of all, some by their vague notions, bold curiosities, and strained allegories, rather draw men from the scripture than endeavor to lead them to it. The example of our great apostle will guide us to other ways of proceeding in our work.



§10. *Obs. 2.* Many hear the word or voice of God to no advantage, but only to aggravate their sin. Their hearing renders their sin provoking to God, and destructive to their own souls. “Some when they heard, provoked.” Daily experience is a sufficient confirmation of this assertion: the word of God is preached unto us; the voice of God sounds amongst us; as our apostle speaks, chap. iv, 2. “Unto us was the gospel preached as well as unto them;” and that with many advantages on our part. They heard the gospel, indeed, but obscurely; and, so to speak, in law language, hard to be understood; we have it plainly, openly, and without parables, declared to us. They heard the voice of him that speak on earth; we hear his who speak from heaven. But what is the issue of God’s thus dealing with us? In plain terms, some neglect the word, some corrupt it, some despise it, few mix it with faith or yield obedience to it. The dispensers of it may, for the most part, take up the complaint of the prophet; “Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?” Isa. liii, 1. And after their most serious and sedulous dealings with some of them in the name of God, they may take up against them the apostle’s alarming close with the unbelieving Jews. Acts xiii, 41. “Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish.” Most of them to whom our Savior preached, perished! They got nothing by hearing his doctrine, through their unbelief, but an aggravation of their sin, and the hastening of their ruin. So he told Capernaum, and the rest of the towns wherein he had wrought his miracles, and to whom he preached the gospel: his presence and preaching for a while brought them into a condition above that of Jerusalem, they were lifted up to heaven; but their unbelief brought them into a condition worse than that of Sodom, they were brought

down to hell, Matt. ii, 21—24. It is, I confess, a great privilege for men to have the word preached to them in its purity and power, Psalm xiv, 19, 20; but privileges are as men use them. Hence the gospel becomes to some “a savor of death unto death,” 2 Cor. ii, 16. Yea, Christ himself in his whole ministry was, “a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, a gin and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem!” Isa. viii, 14; Luke ii, 34. The enjoyment of any part of the means of grace is but a trial, and when any rest therein, they do but boast in the putting on of their harness, not knowing what will be the end of the battle. Let none, therefore, to whom the word of God comes, mistake themselves; they are engaged! and there is no coming off but as conquerors, or ruined! If they receive it not, it will be the aggravation of their sins, the eternal destruction of their souls.

§11. *Obs.* 3. In the most general and visible apostasies of the church, God still reserves a remnant to himself, to bear witness for him by their faith and obedience. “They provoked; howbeit, not all;” some, though few, inherited the promises. The professing church in the world was never nearer ruin than at that time; had Moses but stood out of the way, had he not with all his might of faith and zeal stood in the breach, God had disinherited them all, and utterly destroyed them, and reserved him only for a new stock. How near then was this whole church to apostasy! How near to destruction! How many soever retained their faith, only Caleb and Joshua retained their profession. When God of old brought a flood upon the world for their wickedness, the professing church, that had been very great and large in the posterity of Seth, was reduced to eight persons, and one of them a cursed hypocrite; and when Elijah could see no more in Israel but

himself. There were indeed then seven thousand latent believers, but scarce another visible professor; and it is not hard to imagine how little true faith, regularly professed, there was in the world, when Christ was in the grave. And under the fatal apostasy foretold in the revelation, those that kept the testimony of Jesus are reduced to so small a number, as that they are spoken of under the name of two witnesses. But yet in all these hazardous trials and reductions of the number of professors, God always hath, and ever will reserve to himself a remnant, true, faithful, pure, and undefiled.

§12. And this he doth for weighty reasons: 1. To maintain his own kingdom in the world. Should it at any time totally fail, Christ would be a king without a kingdom, an head without a body, or cease to be the one or the other: wherefore, God will secure some who neither by the abuse of their own liberty, nor by the endeavors of the gates of hell, shall ever be drawn off from their obedience. And this God in his grace, power, and faithfulness, will effect to make good his promises to Christ, which he multiplied to that purpose from the foundation of the world.

2. Should all faith utterly fail in the earth, should all professors provoke God and apostatize from him, then all gracious intercourses between the Holy Spirit and mankind in this world would be at an end. He hath undertaken a work and he will not faint in it, or give it over one moment until it be accomplished, and all the elect brought to God. If therefore the natural children of Abraham fail, he will, out of the stones and rubbish of the Gentiles, raise up to God a living temple wherein he may dwell.

3. God will do this on account of the work he hath for some of his people in all ages and seasons to do in

the world; which is great and various: he will have some always to conflict with his adversaries and overcome them, and therein give testimony to the power of his grace and truth. Could sin and Satan drive all true grace, faith, and obedience out of the world, they would complete their victory; but so long as they have any to conflict with, against whom they cannot prevail, themselves are conquered; the victory is on the other side; and Satan is sensible that he is under the curse. Wherever true faith is, there is a victory, John v, 4; by this doth God make his remnant as a brazen wall, that his enemies shall fight against in vain, Jer. xv, 20, be they, therefore, never so few, they shall do the work of God in conquering Satan and the world through the blood of the Lamb.

4. God will always have a testimony given to his goodness, grace, and mercy. As in the ways of his providence he never left himself 'without witness,' Acts xiv, 17; no more will he in the ways of his grace. Some he will have to give testimony to his goodness in the calling, pardoning, and sanctifying of sinners; but how can this be done if there be none on earth made partakers of that grace? They are proper witnesses who testify what they know and have experience of.

5. And lastly, God will always have a revenue of special glory out of the world, by his worship. And this also must necessarily fail, should not God preserve to himself a remnant of them that truly fear him. And it deserves to be observed, that God lays a few, often a very few of his secret ones, in the balance against the greatest multitude of rebels and transgressors; a great multitude are but some.

§13. *Obs.* 4. God is not displeased with any thing in his people but sin; or, sin is the only proper object of

God's displeasure, and the sinner for sin's sake. With whom was he displeased, but with them that sinned? I need not set up my candle in the sun of this truth; I wish it were as seriously considered practically, as it is confessed notionally. Every revelation of God by his word, and many of his awful works, bear witness to it; and every one hath that witness in himself, as will not admit him to doubt of it. The nature of God, his law, the light of conscience, and the universal sense of judgment, at present fixed, and certainly future, testify to it: and doubtless great is the power of sin, and the craft of Satan, which prevail with most to continue in sin, notwithstanding this uncontrollable conviction. To this we may add, public sins, sins in societies are a great provocation to God. It was not for their private and personal sins that he was thus provoked with his ancient people, but for their conspiracy, as it were in sin. The reasons of this are manifest, and therefore I shall not insist upon them. God helps cities and nations, especially such as hear the voice of God, well to consider it; and all of us to take heed of national prevailing sins!

§14. *Obs. 5.* God sometimes will make men who have been exemplary wicked in sin, righteously exemplary in their punishment. They sinned, saith the apostle, and provoked God, and their carcasses fell in the wilderness. To what end is this reported? It is that we might take heed, 'that we fall not after the same example of unbelief,' chap. iv, 11. There is an example in unbelief, and there is an example in the fall and punishment of unbelievers; and oftentimes judgments have had in them a direct testimony against, and discovery of the nature of the sins revenged by those judgments. Our Savior, indeed, hath taught us, that we are not to fix particular demerits and sins, by our

own surmises, on persons that may be overtaken with dismal providences in the world, merely because they were so overtaken; such was the condition of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices; and the eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloam fell and slew them; of whom he denies, that from what befell them, we have any ground to judge them to have been greater sinners than others, Luke xiii, 3—5. In such cases, this only may be concluded; that such persons were sinners, as all are, and therefore were righteously obnoxious at any time to any severe judgment of God; and the reason of God's singling them out in such a manner, is that mentioned in the same place by our Savior: to declare to others, in the like condition with themselves, that 'unless they repent, they shall all likewise perish.'

§15. If we investigate these reasons a little more particularly, we shall find that God will do thus, to bear witness to his own holiness and severity. In the ordinary course of providence, God gives constant testimony to his own goodness and patience; 'he causeth his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust,' Matt. v, 45. He will sometimes rise up to his work; his strange work; his act, his strange act, Isa. xxviii, 21; that is, to execute great and fearful present judgments on sinners, which, though it be a 'strange work,' seldom coming to pass, yet it is 'his work,' a work that becomes him, and whereby he will manifest his holiness and severity. He reveals his judgments from heaven against the ungodliness of men, Rom. i, 18. And this he sometimes doth by exemplary punishment on exemplary sinners.

2. God doth this to check and control the atheism that is in the hearts of men. Many whilst they see wicked men, especially open and profligate sinners,

prospering in a constant course, are ready to say in their hearts, 'There is no God,' or that he hath forsaken the earth; or Mal. ii, 17, "Where is the God of judgment?" And this encourageth men in their wickedness, as the wise man expressly tells us, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil," Eccles. viii, 11. The consideration hereof makes them cast off all regard of God and to pursue the lusts of their hearts according to the power of their hand. To stay men in this course, God sometimes hurls a thunder-bolt amongst them; casts out an amazing judgment, in a way of vengeance on some notable transgressors; and were it not that God did sometimes awe the world with "his strange works" of vengeance, which he executes at his pleasure, so that great sinners can never be secure one moment from them, it is to be feared that atheism that is in the hearts of men would bring them every where to the condition of things before the flood, when "the whole earth was filled with violence, and all flesh had corrupted its way."

3. God will do thus for the encouragement of them who bear witness to himself in the world, against the wickedness of men. The principal work of the servants of God in the world is to bear witness to God; his being, his holiness, his righteousness, his goodness, his hatred of sin: for this cause are they for the most part mocked, despised, and persecuted in the world. So saith our apostle; 'for therefore we both labor, and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God;' 1 Tim. iv, 10. And sometimes they are ready to faint in their trials. It is to them like a sword in their bones, while their enemies say unto them, "Where is your God?" Psal. xlii, 10. They have indeed a sure word of promise to trust to and to rest upon; and that

which is able to carry them safely and quietly through all temptations and oppositions; but yet God is pleased sometimes to relieve and refresh their spirits by confirming their testimony from heaven, bearing witness to himself and his holiness, by his visible tremendous judgments upon openly notorious provokers, and the mouth of iniquity shall, at least for a season, be stopped. The manifest use of such a dispensation is what Hannah proposeth, 1 Sam. ii, 3. "Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let no arrogance come out of your mouth; for the Lord is a God of knowledge; and by him, actions are weighed." Let men take heed how they arrogantly boast themselves in their sin and wickedness, which is too common with provoking sinners; for God is a God of knowledge and judgment. If they regard not the "judgment to come," but put the evil day from them, yet let them take heed lest God single them out to some distinguished vengeance in this world, to make them examples unto others.

§16. *Obs. 6.* Great destructions by way of judgment and vengeance are instituted representations of the judgment and vengeance to come. I dare not say with the Jews, "that all this provoking generation perished eternally, and that none of them shall have a blessed lot or portion in the world to come." They might repent of their sins and provocations; the oath of God was to their temporal punishment, not to spiritual impenitency. There is a repentance which may prevail for the removal, or at least the deferring, of a temporal judgment denounced, if not confirmed by oath; which yet is not prevalent to free the sinner from eternal ruin; and there is a repentance and humiliation that may free the soul from eternal ruin, and yet not take off a temporal judgment threatened against it. But yet this must be acknowledged, that their



punishment was a great representation of the future judgment; wherein unbelievers shall be cast off for ever: for, as they fell visibly under the wrath and displeasure of God and their carcasses were cast out in the wilderness as a loathsome abomination, so their judgment overtook them under this formal consideration that they were excluded out of the rest of God. And these things together give an evident resemblance of the judgment to come; when sinners shall perish eternally under the wrath of God, and be for ever excluded out of his rest.

§17. *Obs. 7.* All unbelief is accompanied with contumacy and rebellion. When the object to be believed is sufficiently proposed and made known to any person, which it renders it his duty actually to believe, especially when it is proposed in the way and manner prescribed by God in the gospel, that is, with the highest reason, motives, and persuasive inducements conceivable; if such a person mix not the word spoken with faith, his unbelief is ruinous to his soul; and that because it hath contumacy and rebellion accompanying it. If among the arguments used to prevail with the mind, that of supreme authority be one, then rebellion is added to disobedience and stubbornness. The gospel makes it appear that its commands and exhortations to believe are the most reasonable in themselves and most reasonably to be accepted by sinners; and that on all accounts of reason whatever. As for instance; upon the account of divine righteousness, that requireth faith or belief of men; on account of necessity, on the part of them who are required to believe; on account of the goodness, grace, and condescension, that is, in the proposed object of faith, and the command of believers; for the things themselves are excellent and precious, and our advantages by an interest in

them, so great and unspeakable, as they are every where in the gospel manifested to be the effects of infinite grace and love. On account of safety: the end proposed is deliverance from sin, death, hell, and vengeance everlasting; with the attainment of rest, peace, and blessedness, in the enjoyment of God. Now the gospel proposeth the things which it requires to be believed, as the only way and means for the attaining of this end; and that this way is safe, and secure, that never any one miscarried in it, or shall do for ever; it gives all assurance that the word, promises, covenant, and oath of God can afford. On all which accounts it follows, that it is a reasonable thing that we should believe. Again; consider the manner how the gospel proposeth to us the object of faith, or the things which it requireth us to believe; for it doth not do this by a mere naked declaration of them, attended with a severe command; its adds entreaties, exhortations, reasonings, encouragements, promises, threatenings, and every generous and moving topic that is calculated to prevail on the minds of rational creatures. All the things of our own eternal concernment are proposed to us with that gentleness, tenderness, and condescension; that love, that earnestness, that evidence of an high concern for our good, and that compassionate affection, as will assuredly aggravate the guilt of rejecting the tender it makes. And hence it is that the scripture every where layeth the cause of men's unbelief on their wills, their love of sin, their obstinacy, and hardness of heart.

§18. *Obs.* 8. Unbelief not only justifies, but also glorifies, the greatest severities of God, against them in whom it prevails. The apostle having declared the severity of God towards the people in the wilderness, adds this as the reason of it—"because of their unbe-

lief." They provoked him by their unbelief, and therefore were so severely destroyed, as he had declared. And besides, his principal intention is to manifest, that those who follow them in the same sin, now under the gospel, should in like manner perish—eternally perish—by which God will glorify himself. His design in the gospel, and by the objects proposed to our faith, is to glorify himself, and all the holy attributes of his nature; and it is that which becomes him, because it is natural and necessary to him in all things to will his own glory. Now unbelief is nothing but the attempt of sin and Satan to frustrate the whole design of God, to make him a liar, 1 John v, 10; to keep him from being known and worshipped, as God only wise, infinitely righteous, holy, faithful, gracious, and bountiful. And where then is the glory of God? Or what is left him for which he should be glorified or worshipped? And can this atheistical, rebellious attempt be too severely revenged? Is not God not only justified in that decretory sentence, "He that believeth not shall be damned?" but doth it not, even in the hearts of all the creation, call aloud for the vindication of his glory, from this attempt cast upon it, an horrible attempt to frustrate his design for the advancement of it? As sure as God is God, unbelief shall not go unpunished. Yes, from the gracious salvation of believers, and righteous condemnation of them who will not believe doth arise that great and triumphant glory, wherein God will be admired and adored by the whole rational creation to eternity.

§19. *Obs.* 9. The oath of God is engaged against no sin but unbelief. As God hath given his oath for the confirmation and consolation of believers, both as to the things themselves which they are to believe, and as to their assured safety on their believing, and to

nothing else directly in a way of grace; so he hath, in a way of justice, engaged his oath against no sin but that of unbelief, and for the exclusion of unbelievers from eternal rest. "To whom swear he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?" Other sins there are that have great provocations in them; so had the murmurings of the people in the wilderness. But it is their relation to unbelief, their growing upon that stock, that gives them such an height of provocation, as that God at any time enters a caveat against them by his oath. And in this sense it is not said amiss, that "unbelief is the only damning sin;" because as there is no other sin but may be, but shall be remitted to men upon believing; so the formal consideration, on which other sins, in gospel hearers, fall under judgment, is unbelief.

§20. Some doubt whether they should believe or no; not notionally and indefinitely, but practically and in particular; which causeth them to fluctuate all their days. But what is it they doubt of in this matter? Is it whether it be their duty to believe or no? It is indispensably required of them by the command of God; so that not to do so, is the greatest height of disobedience that they can make themselves guilty of. Is it whether they may do so, and whether they shall find acceptance with God in their so doing? This calls his righteousness and faithfulness in question. Is it because of the many objections which they find arising against themselves, which leave them no hope of a personal participation of the good things promised? But what are all their objections before those evidences that are rendered in the gospel to the contrary? The truth is, if men will not believe, it is out of love to sin, and a dislike of the design of God to glorify himself by Jesus Christ; if then it be a question with

you whether you should believe or not, consider if you do not, what will be the event. The demerit of your sin is such, as that it will justify, yea, and glorify God in his greatest severity against you; and his oath is engaged that you shall never enter his rest. What like this can you fear on the other hand; and why do you doubt what course to take?

§21. To the foregoing observations let the following be added:

1. Whatever we consider in sin, God principally considers the spring of it in unbelief, as that which maketh the most direct and immediate opposition to himself.

2. Unbelief is the immediate root and cause of all provoking sins. As faith is the spring of all obedience, so is unbelief of all sin; all sins of flesh and spirit have no other root. Did men believe either the promises or threatenings of God, they would not by their sins so neglect him as they do. And as this is so with respect to the total prevalency of unbelief; so it is as to its partial efficacy. As our disobedience follows in proportion to the operation of our faith; so do all our sins and irregularities answer the working and prevalency of unbelief in us.

3. To disbelieve God; with respect to any special design of glorifying himself, is the greatest and highest provocation. Unbelief deprives men of all interest in or right to the promises of God for no unbeliever shall ever enter into the rest of God.

## CHAPTER IV.

## VERSE 1, 2.

*Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them; but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.*

§1. Introduction. §2. (I.) The kind of fear intended. §3. What is meant by the promise being left. §4. What the rest here meant. §5. Its nature described. §6—9. The remaining clauses explained. §10—15. (II.) Observations. §16—18. The great mystery of profitable believing consists in the proper mixing of truth and faith.

§1. **T**HIS chapter is of the same nature, and carrieth on the same design with that foregoing. That contained an exhortation to faith, obedience, and perseverance, enforced by a most apposite and striking instance in the punishment which befell some ancient professors who were guilty of sins contrary to those duties. And this was done by the exposition and application of a prophetic testimony, suggesting an example of God's dealing with former unbelievers. Now whereas in the words of the psalmist there is not only a moral example proposed, but a prophecy also interwoven concerning the rest of God in Christ by the gospel, and our duty thereon; the apostle proceeds to expound, improve, and confirm his exhortation from the scope and word of that prophecy. They might be apt to say, what have we to do with the people in the wilderness, with the promise of entering into Canaan; or with what the psalmist from thence exhorted our fathers to? Nay, these things, saith the apostle, belong to you in an especial manner: for, besides that, you may in the example proposed see evidently what you are to expect if you fall into the same sins; the things treat-

ed of in the psalm are a prophetic direction designed for your special use in your present condition.

§2. (I.) (Φοβηθωμεν.) "Let us fear," The noun (Φοβος,) and the verb (Φοβεομαι,) are used in the New Testament to express all sorts of fears; natural, civil, sinful, and religious fear. The fear here intended is religious, relating to God, his worship, and our obedience; and this is fourfold, (1.) of terror, (2.) of diffidence, (3.) of reverence, (4.) of care, solicitousness, and watchfulness. Let us inquire which of them it is that is intended.

In this example of God's dealing with their progenitors in the wilderness, he declares also that there is included a commination of similar dealing with all others who shall fall into the same sin of unbelief; none may flatter themselves with vain hopes of any exemption in this matter; for unbelievers shall never enter into the rest of God, which he farther confirms in these two verses, though his present exhortation be an immediate inference from what went before; "Wherefore let us fear." How must we do this? With what kind of fear? Not with a fear of diffidence, of doubting, of wavering, of uncertainty as to the event of our obedience; this is enjoined to none, but is evidently a fruit of unbelief, and therefore cannot be our duty. Neither can it be a dismayedness of mind upon a prospect of difficulties and dangers in the way; for this is the sluggard's fear, who cries, "there is a lion in the streets, I shall be slain." Nor is it that general fear of reverence with which we ought to be possessed in all our concerns with God; for that is not particularly influenced by threatenings and the severity of God; seeing we are bound always, in that sense to "fear the Lord and his goodness." It remains, therefore, that the fear here intended, is compounded of an awful apprehension of the holiness and greatness of God, with

his severity against sin, balancing the soul against temptation, and careful diligence, in the use of means to avoid the threatened evil.

§3. ‘Lest a promise being left us,’ (μηποτε καλαλειπομενης της επαγγελιας.) The intention of these words is variously apprehended by interpreters; but the difference comes to this, whether by (καλαλειπομενης) ‘being left,’ the act of God in giving the promise, or the neglect of men in refusing it, be intended. The verb here used, (καλαλειπω) is of an ambiguous signification; sometimes it is used for (*desero, negligo,*) to desert, neglect, or forsake in a culpable manner. Frequent instances of this occur in all authors; and if that sense be here admitted, it confines the meaning of the words to the latter interpretation; ‘Lest the promise being forsaken or neglected.’ The word may here well denote the act of God, in leaving or proposing the promise to us; a promise remaining for us to mix with faith. Whichever of them you embrace, the main design of the apostle, in the whole verse, is kept entire, and either way the result of the whole verse is the same. According to the first, this is the sum: seeing therefore that they miscarried through contumacy and unbelief, let us fear lest we fall into the same sins by leaving the promises, and so come short of entering into the rest now proposed. In the second way: take heed lest by your unbelief, rejecting the promise graciously left us, you fall short of the rest of God. I shall not absolutely determine upon either sense, but am inclined to embrace the former; because the apostle seems in these words to lay the foundation of all his ensuing arguments and exhortations in this chapter; and this is, that a promise of entering into the rest of God is left us now under the gospel. Besides, the last clause of the words, ‘Lest any of you should seem



to come short of it," do primarily and directly express the sin and not the punishment of unbelievers, as we shall see afterwards; the promise, and not the rest of God, is therefore the object in them considered. Moreover the apostle after sundry arguments gathers up all into a conclusion, ver. 11, "there remaineth therefore a rest for the people of God;" where the word (*απολειπειται*) rendered remaineth, of the same root with this, is used in the sense of the first interpretation.

§4. 'Of entering into his rest.' Expositors generally grant, that it is the rest of glory which is here intended; but I must take the liberty to dissent from that supposition, upon the following reasons:

1. The rest here proposed is peculiar to the gospel, and contradistinct from that proposed to the people under the economy of Moses; for, whereas it is said, that the people in the wilderness failed, and came short of entering into the rest promised them, the apostle proves from the psalmist, that there is another rest proposed under the gospel; and this cannot be the eternal rest of glory, because those under the Old Testament had the promise of that rest, no less than we have under the gospel. For with respect that, our apostle affirms, that the gospel was preached to them as well as to us; no less truly, though less clearly. And this rest multitudes of them entered into; for they were both justified by faith, Rom. iv, 3—8, and had the adoption of his children, Rom. ix, 5. And when they died, entered into eternal rest with God. This, therefore, cannot be that other rest which is provided under the gospel, in opposition to that proposed under the law.

2. He plainly carrieth on, throughout his discourse, an antithesis consisting of many parts: the principal

subject of it is, the two people; those in the wilderness, and the Hebrews to whom the gospel was now preached. Now that rest whereinto they entered not, was the quiet settled state of God's solemn worship in the land of Canaan, or, in other words, a peaceable church state for the worship of God, in the land and place chosen for that purpose. Now it is not the rest of heaven that, in the antithesis between the law and gospel, is opposed to that just mentioned; but the rest that believers have in Christ, with that church-state and worship, which, as the great prophet of the church, he has erected; and into the possession of which he powerfully leads them, as did Joshua the people of old into the rest of Canaan.

3. The apostle plainly affirms this to be his intention, ver. 3, "For we which have believed do enter into rest;" it is such a rest, it is that very rest, which believers enter into in this world; and this is the rest which we have by Christ in the grace and worship of the gospel.

4. Christ and the gospel were promised of old to the people as a means and state of rest; and in answer to those promises, they are here actually proposed to their enjoyment. This is that which the people of God in all ages looked for, and which in the preaching of the gospel was proposed to them.

5. The true nature of this rest may be discovered from the promise of it; for a promise is said to remain of entering into his rest. Now this promise is no other but the gospel itself, as preached to us, as the apostle expressly declares in the next verse. The want of a due consideration of this particular is what, I presume, hath led expositors into a mistake in this matter. For they eye only the promise of eternal life given in the gospel; which is but a part of it, and that con-

sequentially to sundry other promises. That promise concerns only them who actually believe, but the apostle principally intends a promise proposed to men as the prime object of their faith and encouragement to believing, Christ himself, and the benefits of his mediation; which we must be first interested in, before we can lay any claim to the promise of eternal life.

6. The apostle's design is—not to prefer heaven, immortality, and glory, above the law, and that rest in God's worship which the people had in the land of Canaan; for who, even of the Hebrews themselves, ever doubted of this? but—to set out the excellency of the gospel, its worship, and the church-state, to which we are called by Jesus Christ, above all prior privileges; and if this be not always duly considered, no part of the epistle can be rightly understood.

§5. This being the rest here proposed, as promised in the gospel; our next inquiry is into the nature of it, or wherein it consists. And we shall find that it consists

1. In peace with God, in the free and full justification of the persons of believers from all their sins by the blood of Christ, Rom. v, 1, "Being justified by faith we have peace with God," Ephes. i, 4. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our sins." This is fully expressed, Acts xiii, 32, 33—38, 39, "We declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise that was made unto the fathers: God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again. Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." Nor is it of force to except, that this was enjoyed also un-

der the Old Testament; for although it were so in the substance of it, yet it was not so as a complete rest. Justification, and peace with God thereon, are properly and directly ours; they were theirs by a participation in our privileges; God, having 'ordained some better things for us, that they without us should not be made perfect,' Heb. xi, ult.

2. In our freedom from bondage, a servile frame of spirit in the worship of God. Under the Old Testament they had the spirits of servants, though they were sons; 'For the heir as long as he is (*νηπιος*) *an infant*, unable to guide himself, differeth nothing from a servant, but is under tutors and governors, until the time appointed of the Father.' And this kept them from that full and complete rest, which now is to be entered into, and which cannot be but where there is liberty.

3. Evangelical rest consists in a delivery from the yoke and bondage of Mosaical institutions. For as the people of old had a spirit of bondage, so they had upon them (*ζυγον*) *a yoke*. And this rest in the consciences of men, from an obligation to a multitude of anxious scrupulous observances, under most severe revenging penalties, is no small part of that rest, which our Savior proposes as an encouragement to sinners for coming to him, Matt. ii, 28—30.

4. This rest consists in that gospel worship to which we are called. This is a blessed rest on account, for instance, of that liberty of spirit which believers have in obeying it; of the assistance which the worshippers have for the performance of the worship in an acceptable manner; and, finally, the worship itself, and the obedience it requires, are not grievous; but easy, gentle, rational, suited to the principles of the new nature of the worshippers.

5. This also is God's rest; for God resteth, ultimately and absolutely, as to all the ends of his glory, in Christ, as exhibited in the gospel; and through him he rests in his love towards believers also; and this is that worship which he ultimately and unchangeably requires in this world, nor is it liable to any alteration or change to the consummation of all things. This, therefore, is God's rest and ours.

§6. 'Lest any of you should seem to come short of it; (τις ἐξ ὑμῶν) *any of you*. We all ought to take care of one another, or fear each other's dangers and temptations, laboring to prevent their efficacy, by mutual brotherly care and assistance, (δοκῆ) *should seem*, refers to at any time. The apostle intends to warn them against all appearance of any such failing as that he cautions them against; desiring them to take heed that none of them do, by remitting their former zeal and diligence, give any signs of a declension from, or desertion of their profession; let there be no apparent resemblance of any such thing found amongst you. 'To come short,' (υστερημεναι) *to be left behind*, that is, in the work of first receiving the promise when proposed. If men fail in the beginning, probably they will quite give over in their progress. Generally, expositors think here is an allusion to them who run in a race; but the allusion is taken from the people in the wilderness, and their passing into the land of Canaan. Most of them were heavy through unbelief, lagging in their progress, and, as it were, left behind in the wilderness, where they perished, and came short of entering into the promised land.

§7. 'For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them,' or, 'For we were evangelized even as they.' The word (ευαγγελιζομαι) *evangelized*, though of various construction, is here used positively, and

the nominative case (*ἡμεῖς*) *we* is included in the verb substantive (*ἔσμεν*) *we are evangelized*; we have the gospel preached unto us. And in what way soever the word is used, it no where denotes the receiving of the gospel in the power of it, by them who are evangelized; that is, it includes not the faith of the hearers, but only expresseth the act of preaching, and the outward enjoyment of it. The gospel, and therein the promise of entering into the rest of God, is preaching to us, (*καθὰπερ κα κεινοί*) *even as they*; they who had, who disbelieved, and rejected the promise of God, and so came short of entering into his rest. The comparison therefore intended, is merely between the persons, **THEY** and **WE**. As they enjoyed the gospel, so do we; as it was preached to them, so to us. The promise made to Abraham, contained the substance of the gospel, and was confirmed to his posterity; all the typical institutions of the law, afterwards introduced, had no other end but to instruct the people in the nature and accomplishment of the promise, and to this purpose they all served until the time of reformation. To the spiritual part of the promise made to Abraham, there was annexed a promise of the inheritance of the land of Canaan, that it might instruct him and his seed in the nature of faith, to live in the expectation of what is not theirs in possession; that it might be a pledge of the love, power, and faithfulness of God, in accomplishing the spiritual part of the promise; that it might be a place of rest for the church, wherein it might attend solemnly to the observance of all those institutions of worship, which were appointed to direct them to the promise. Hence the declaration of the promise of entering into Canaan, and the rest of God therein, became, in an especial manner, the 'preaching of the gospel' to them; the land itself

and their possession of it was sacramental. It is worthy of remark, that the words, 'for unto us was the gospel preached even as unto them,' seem to import, that we are no less concerned in the gospel declaration, and the promise made unto them, than they were; otherwise the apostle would have rather said, the gospel was preached to them even as to us; seeing of its preaching to the present Hebrews there could be no question. Paul reminds his brethren, that their progenitors had a promise given them of entering into the rest of God, which, because of unbelief, they came short of, and perished under his displeasure; now, whereas, they might reply, what is that to us, wherein are we concerned in it; can we reject a promise which doth not belong to us? The apostle replies, to us, to all the posterity of Abraham in all generations was the gospel preached, in the promise of entering into the rest of God; and may no less be sinned against at any time by unbelief, than it was by them to whom it was at first granted; when it was preached to them, it was also preached to us, so that the obligation to faith and obedience was no less on the one than on the other generation; for the present dispensation of the gospel was but the continuation of the same gracious promise.

§8. 'The word preached did not profit them;' (*ο λογος της ακουης*) *the word of hearing*, which expression, being general, is limited by (*επαγγελια*) *the promise*, in the verse foregoing. The word (*ο λογος*) may be (*επαγγελια*) *a promise* in itself, but if it be not the word of hearing, that is, so managed by the appointment of God as that we may hear it, we could have no advantage by it. In short, the phrase (*ο λογος της ακουης*) imports, 'the promise preached,' and as preached. Of this word it is said, 'it profited them not,' they had no

advantage by it; for it was a notorious fact, that notwithstanding the promise given of entering into the rest of God, they entered not in. And there seems to be a meiosis in the words also; it was so far from benefiting them, that it became the innocent occasion of their ruin. As if he had said, consider what befell them, how they perished in the wilderness under the indignation of God, and you will see how far they were from having any advantage by what they heard; and such will be the issue with all that shall neglect the word in like manner.

§9. 'Not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.' The word not being mixed (*μη συγκεκραμμενος*) taken in a natural sense, denotes to mix or mingle one thing with another, as water and wine; or to mix compositions in cordials, or in poisons. This mixture which was properly of a cup to drink, was sometimes so made as to give it strength and efficacy to inebriate, or give it any pernicious effect; and hence a cup of mixture is expressed as an aggravation. Sometimes the mixture was made to temperate and alleviate, as water mixed with strong inebriating wine; hence a cup without mixture is an expression of great indignation; Rev. xiv, 10, nothing being added to the wine of fury and astonishment to take off its fierceness. This being the import of the word, expositors illustrate the whole sense by various allusions, whence they suppose the expression to arise: some to the mixture of things to be eaten and drank, that they may be made suitable and useful to the nourishment of the body; some to the mixture of the natural ferment of the stomach with meat and drink, causing digestion and nourishment; and this last allusion seems well to represent the nature of faith in this matter. The sum is, spiritual truths, being savingly believed, are



united with that faith which receives them; so incorporated with it, as that they come to be realized in the soul, and to be turned into the principle of that new nature whereby we live to God. The same promise being left to us as to them, and they came short of it for want of mixing faith with it, we have reason to be watchful against the like miscarriages in ourselves.

§10. II. The subject will be farther cleared by the ensuing observations:

*Obs.* 1. Fear is the proper object of gospel communications, which ought to be answerable to our several conditions, and grounds of obnoxiousness to threatenings. This is that which the apostle presseth us to, on the consideration of the severity of God against unbelievers, peremptorily excluding them out of his rest, after they had rejected the promise; 'Let us,' saith he, 'fear therefore.' As the sum of all promises is enwrapped in those words, 'He that believeth shall be saved; Mark xvi, 16, so the sum of all threatenings is in the following: "He that believeth not shall be damned. And a like summary of gospel promises and threatenings we have again, John iii, 36. 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.' The law (as distinguished from the gospel) knows no more of gospel threatenings than of gospel promises; for the threatenings of the law lie against sinners for sins committed; the threatenings of the gospel are against sinners, for refusing the remedy provided and tendered to them. They are superadded to those of the law, and in them doth the gospel when rejected become 'death unto death;' 2 Cor. ii, 16, by the addition of that punishment contained in its threatenings, to that which was contained in the threatenings of the law. And this duty is always incumbent on them to whom

the dispensation of the gospel is committed; for not only may they justly suppose that such there are, and always will be, in all churches, but also many do continually declare themselves to be in no better state; and the discovery of it to them by the word is a great part of our ministerial duty; for they have a respect to the nature of God, and are declarative of his condemning, hating, and forbidding that which the threatening is denounced against; they have a respect to the *will* of God and declare the connexion there is, by God's institution between the sin prohibited and the punishment threatened; as in that word, "He that believeth not shall be damned," in which God declares the infallible connexion there is, by virtue of his constitution, between infidelity and damnation. Wherever the one is final, the other shall be inevitable: and in this sense they belong undoubtedly and properly to believers; that is, they are to be declared and preached to them, or pressed upon their consciences; for they are annexed to the dispensation of the covenant of grace as an *instituted means*, to render it effectual, and to accomplish the ends of it. Noah, when he was warned of God concerning the deluge, being moved with fear, prepared an ark, Heb. ii, 7. A due apprehension of the approaching judgment due to sin, and threatened by the Lord against it, made him wary; (*εὐλαβηθεὶς*) he was "moved by this careful fear," to use the appointed means for his deliverance and safety. The nature of this fear, as discovering itself in its effects, consists principally in a *sedulous watchfulness* against all sin by a diligent use of instituted means: and to promote this is the direct design of God in his communications. What is the mind and intention of God in any of his communications, either as recorded in his word, or as declared and preached to us by his appointment? It is

this; that considering the terror of the Lord and the desert of sin we should apply ourselves to that constancy in obedience, which we are guided to, under the conduct of his good Spirit, whereby we may avoid it.

And hence followeth, a constant watchfulness against all carnal confidence and security; "Thou standest by faith," saith the apostle, "be not high-minded but fear," Rom. ii, 20. And whence doth he derive the caution? From the severity of God in dealing with other professors, and the virtual threats contained therein: "For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he spare not thee." ver. 21. This fear is the great preventive of carnal security; its stands upon its watch to prevent the mind from being influenced by the sloth, or negligence, or any other lusts of the flesh; or by pride, presumption, elation of heart, and other lusts of the spirit. And therefore, this fear is not such a dread as may take a sudden impression on believers by a surprisal, or under some special guilt contracted, but that which ought to accompany us in our whole course, as the apostle Peter adviseth us; "See," saith he, "that you pass the time of your sojourning here with fear." 1 Pet. i, 17.

§11. *Obs. 2.* It is a matter of great and tremendous consequence, to have the promises left and proposed to us. When Moses had of old declared the law to the people, he assured them that he had set life and death before them, one whereof would be the unquestionable consequent of that proposal. Much more may this be said of the promises of the gospel; they are "a savor of life unto life," or "of death unto death," to all to whom they are revealed, as containing and exhibiting the whole love, goodness, and grace of God towards mankind; the infinite wisdom of the counsel of his will about their salvation. Now even amongst

men, it is a thing of some hazard and consequence, for any to have any offer made them of the favor, love, and kindness of potentates or princes; for they do not take any thing more unkindly nor usually revenge more severely than the neglect of their favors; though their favor be of little worth, and not at all to be confided in; Psalm cxlvi, 3, 4. And what shall we think of this amazing tender of all this grace, love, and kindness exhibited in the promise! Everlasting blessedness, or everlasting woe will be the inevitable issue.

§12. *Obs.* 3. The failing of men through their unbelief doth no way cause the promise of God to fail or cease. Those to whom the promise here mentioned was first proposed, came short of it, believed it not, and so had no benefit by it. What then became of the promise itself? did that fail also and become of none effect? God forbid; it still remained and was left for others. This our apostle more fully declares elsewhere, Rom. ix, 4—6. For having shewn that the promises of God were given to the posterity of Abraham, he foresaw an objection that might be taken from thence against the truth and efficacy of the promises themselves, which he anticipates and answers; ver. 6. “Not as though the word of God,” that is, the word of promise, “hath taken none effect;” and so proceedeth to shew, that whosoever, and how many soever, reject the promise, yet they do it only to their own ruin; the promise shall have its effect in others; “for what if some did not believe, shall their unbelief make the faith of God of none effect? God forbid.” The faith of God, that is, “his glory in his veracity,” as the apostle shews in the next words, “Yea, let God be true and every man a liar,” he is engaged for the accomplishment of his promises. Men by their unbelief may dissappoint themselves of their expectation, but

cannot bereave God of his faithfulness. And the reason on the one hand is, that God doth not give his promise to all men to have their gracious effect upon them, whether they will or no, whether they believe or reject them: and on the other hand, he can and will raise up them, who shall through his grace mix his promise with faith, and enjoy the benefit of it. If the natural seed of Abraham prove obstinate, he can out of stones raise up children unto him, who shall be his heirs to inherit the promises. And therefore, when the gospel is preached to any nation, or city, or assembly, the glory and success of it depend not upon the wills of them to whom it is preached; neither is it frustrated by their unbelief: for the salvation contained in it, shall be disposed of to others, but they and their house shall be destroyed. This our Savior often threatened upon the obstinate Jews, which accordingly came to pass. And God hath blessed ends in granting the outward dispensation of the promises even to them by whom they are rejected; hence our apostle tells us, that those who preach the gospel are “a sweet savor of Christ unto God, as well in them that perish, as in them that are saved,” 2 Cor. ii, 15. Christ is glorified and God in him in the dispensation of it, whether men receive or reject it.

§13. *Obs.* 4. Not only backsliding through unbelief, but all appearances of tergiversation in profession, and occasions of them in times of difficulty and trials, ought to be carefully avoided by professors: “Lest any of you “should seem.” Not only a profession, but also the beauty and glory of it is required of us. Now there are two parts of our profession that we are to heed lest we should seem to fail when times of difficulty attend us: the one is personal holiness, righteousness, and universal obedience; the other is the due

observance of all the commands, ordinances, and institutions of Christ in the gospel. Therefore, we should have an equal respect always to both these parts of profession, lest failing in one we be found at length to fail in the whole. For example, lest while we are sedulous about the due and strict observance of the duties of instituted worship, a neglect or decay should grow upon us, as to holiness or moral righteousness. For whilst the mind is deeply exercised about those duties, either out of a peculiar bent of spirit towards them, or from the opposition that is made to them, the whole man is oftentimes so engaged, as that it is regardless of personal holiness and righteousness. Such persons have seemed like keepers of a vineyard, but their own vineyard they have not kept; whilst they have been intent on one part of the profession, others far more important have been neglected. Corrupt nature is apt to compensate in the conscience, the neglect of one duty with diligence in another; and if men engage in a present duty, a duty as they judge exceeding acceptable with God, and attended with difficulty in the world, they are apt enough to think that they may give themselves a dispensation in some other things; that they need not attend to universal holiness and obedience, with the strictest circumspection and accuracy, as seems to be required; yea, this is the ruin of most hypocrites and false professors in the world.—The other part of our profession consists in our adherence to a due observance of all gospel institutions and commands, according to the charge of Christ; Matt. xxviii, 20; and the necessity of this part of our profession appears from its comparative importance, for the visible kingdom of Christ in this world depends upon it.

§14. *Obs.* 5. It is a signal privilege to be evangelized. This the prophet emphatically expresseth; Isa.

ix, 1, 2, "Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulon, and the land of Naphtali, and afterwards did most grievously afflict her by the way of the sea beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations; the people that walked in darkness, have seen a great light; they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." Christ in the preaching of the gospel is called the "Sun of righteousness," as he who brings righteousness, "life and immortality to light by the gospel." Now what greater privilege can such as have been kept all their days in a dungeon of darkness under the sentence of death be made partakers of, than to be brought out into the light of the sun, with a tender of life, peace, and liberty made them? And this is in proportion as spiritual darkness, inevitably tending to eternal darkness and death, is more miserable than any temporal darkness; and in proportion as spiritual light, the "light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ," excelleth the outward light which directs the body. Hence Peter expresseth the effect of the gospel by God's calling us "out of darkness into his marvellous light," 1 Pet. ii, 9. It is the gospel alone that brings the light of God, or life and blessedness, to men, who without it are under the power of darkness here, and reserved for everlasting darkness and misery hereafter.

§15. *Obs. 6.* The gospel is no new doctrine: it was preached to the people of old, as well as unto us. The great prejudice against the gospel at its first preaching was, that it was generally esteemed (*καινη διδαχη*) a new doctrine, Acts xvii, 18, a matter never known before in the world. And so was the preaching of Christ himself charged to be, Mark i, 27. But

we may say of the gospel, what John says of the commandment of love; it is both a *new* commandment, and it is an *old* one, which was from the beginning, 1 John ii, 7, 8. In the preaching of the gospel by the Lord Jesus Christ himself, and his apostles, it was new in respect of the manner of its administration with sundry circumstances of light, evidence, and power; and so it is in all ages, in respect to any fresh discoveries of truth from the word, formerly hidden or eclipsed: but whatever new declarations have been made of it, whatever means have been used to instruct men in it, yet the gospel itself was still the same throughout all times and ages. What John the Baptist said of Christ and himself, may be accommodated to the law and the gospel, as preached by Christ and his apostles; though it came after the law, yet it was preferred above it, because it was before it. It was, in the substance and efficacy of it, revealed and promulgated long before the giving of the law, and therefore in all things was to be preferred before it. It appears then from first to last, the gospel is, and ever was, the only way of coming to God; and to think of any other way for that end is both highly vain, and exceedingly derogatory to the glory of God's wisdom, faithfulness, and holiness.

§16. *Obs.* 7. The great mystery of profitable believing consists in the mixing, or incorporating of truth and faith in the minds of believers. Truth, as truth, is the proper object of the understanding: hence, as it can assent to nothing but under the notion of truth; so what is so indeed, being duly proposed, it embraceth and cleaveth to necessarily and unavoidably. For truth and the understanding are as it were of the same nature, and being orderly brought together, do absolutely incorporate. It implants a type and



figure of itself upon the mind; and knowledge is the relation, or rather the union that is between the mind and truth, or the things that the mind apprehends as true. And where this is not, when men have only fluctuating conceptions about things, their minds are filled indeed with opinions, but they have no true knowledge of any thing: as the mind acts naturally by its reason, to receive truths that are natural and suited to its capacity; so it acts spiritually and supernaturally by faith, to receive truths spiritual and supernatural. Herewith are these truths to be mixed and incorporated. Believing doth not consist in a mere assent to the truth of the objects, but in such a reception of them, as gives them a real subsistence in the soul; and this in-being of the things believed really operating and producing their immediate effect, love, joy, and obedience, is their spiritual mixture and incorporation, whereof we speak. And here lies the main difference between saving faith, and the temporary persuasions of convinced persons, the latter gives no subsistence to the things believed in the minds of men, so as to produce their proper effects. It may be said of them as it is of the law in another case; they have the shadow of good things to come, but not the very image of the things. There is not a real reflection of the things they profess to believe, made upon their minds: for instance; the death of Christ, or Christ crucified, is proposed to our faith in the gospel; now the proper effect of genuine faith in this object, is to destroy, to crucify, or mortify sin in us; but where it is apprehended by a temporary faith only, this effect will not at all be produced in the soul. Sin will not be mortified, but rather secretly encouraged; for it is natural to men of corrupt minds to conclude, that they may "continue in sin because grace doth abound."—

On the contrary, where faith gives the subsistence before mentioned to the death of Christ in the soul, it will undoubtedly be the death of sin, Rom. vi, 3, 4. A man may think well of that which is tendered him, and yet not receive it; but what a man receives duly, and for himself, becomes properly his own. This work of faith then, in receiving the word of promise, with Christ and his atonement, consists in its giving them a real admittance into the soul, to abide there as in their proper place. And how is it to be received? As a word, this is to be (*εμφυσιος*) *ingrafted* into the mind. Now we all know that by ingrafting there becomes an incorporation, a mixture of the natures of the stock and graft into one common principle. As the scion, being inoculated or grafted into the stock, turns the natural juice of the stock into another kind of fructifying nutriment than it had before; so the word being by its mixture with faith ingrafted into the soul, changeth the natural operation of it, to the production of spiritual effects, which before it had no virtue for; and it transforms also the whole mind, according to another allusion, chap. vi, 17, into a new shape, as wax is changed by the impression of a seal into the likeness of it. The word is said to be food, strong meat, and milk, suited to the respective ages and constitutions of believers; and Christ, the principal subject of the gospel revelation says of himself, that he is the bread that came down from heaven, that his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed. Now faith is the eating of this provision; and as in eating the food is received, and by digestion turned into the very substance of the body; so the word being prepared as spiritual food for the soul, is received by faith, and by a spiritual eating and digestion is turned into an increase and strength-

ening of the vital principles of spiritual obedience; and then doth the "word profit" them that hear it. Hence is the word of Christ said to dwell in us, Col. iii, 16, "Let the word of Christ dwell richly in you in all wisdom;" and that inhabitation is from this spiritual incorporation or mixing with faith.

Without this it may indeed have various effects upon the mind, affections, and conscience; but it comes to no abiding habitation. Into the minds of some, for instance, it casts its rays for a season, (*Φαίνει*) but is not received nor comprehended, John i, 5; and therefore (*εν ἀδυνατεί*) it doth not enlighten them; it comes and departs almost like lightning, which rather amazeth than guideth. On the affections of some it makes a transient impression, so that they hear it, and admit of its dispensation with joy, and some present satisfaction, Matt. xv, 20; yet it is but like the stroke of a skilful hand upon the strings of a musical instrument, that makes a pleasant sound for the present, which insensibly sinks and dies away. It lays hold on the consciences of some, and presseth them to a reformation of conduct, until they do many things gladly, Mark xvi, 20; but this is only in virtue of an efficacious impression from without; for the word doth not dwell in them, except it hath a subsistence in the soul, by its incorporation with faith, in the manner described. And alas! how few thus improve the word; it is but in one sort of ground, where the seed incorporates so with the earth, as to take root and bring forth fruit, which should give us all a godly jealousy over our hearts in this matter, that we be not deceived.

§17. It is therefore worth our inquiry, by what means faith is assisted in this work of profitably mixing the word with itself? And among these we place,

1. Constant meditation, wherein faith itself is exercised, and its acts are multiplied. Constantly fixing the mind by spiritual meditations on its proper object is (*καλοπριζεσθαι*) *to behold steadfastly* the glory of God in Jesus Christ, expressed in the gospel as in a glass, 2 Cor. iii, 18. For the meditation of faith is an intuition into the things believed, which operates a change into the same image, which is but another expression of the incorporation insisted on. As when a man hath an adequate idea or model in his mind of any thing to be effected, he casteth the image framed in his mind upon his work, that it shall exactly answer it; and so when a man diligently contemplates any thing without him it begets an idea of it in his mind, or casts it into the same image. And this meditation by which faith operates, is to be intuitive, constant, looking into the nature of things believed. The apostle James, by a simile, not less apposite to his purpose than beautiful and elegant, tells us, that he who is a mere hearer of the word, is “like a man considering his natural face in a glass, who goeth away and immediately forgetteth what manner of man he was,” chap. i, 24. What a striking picture of a man that uses but a slight and perfunctuary consideration of the word! But, saith he, the person (*ὁ παρακνύσας*) “who diligently bows down,” and looks into the perfect law of liberty, or the word of truth, and continueth therein by meditation and inquiry, is blessed in all his ways. The soul by faith meditating on the word of promise, and the subject matter of it, Christ and his righteousness, Christ is thereby formed in it; Gal. iv, 19; and the word itself is inseparably mixed “with faith,” so as to subsist with it in the soul, and to produce therein its proper effects. This is to be “spiritually minded;” and (*Φρονεῖν τὰ ἀνω*) Col. iii, 2; “to mind the things that are

above," as those which yield the best relish and savor to the mind.

§18. 2. Faith sets love at work upon the objects proposed to be believed. There is in the gospel and its promises not only the truth to be assented to, but also its goodness, excellency, and suitableness. Under this consideration of them, they are proper objects for love to fix on, and faith worketh by love, not only in acts and duties of mercy, righteousness, and charity towards men, but also in adhering to, and delighting in the things of God which are revealed as lovely. Faith makes the soul in love with spiritual things; love engages all other affections, and fills the mind continually with thoughtfulness about them and desires after them: and this mightily helps on the spiritual "mixture of faith and the word." It is known that love is greatly effectual to work an assimilation between the mind and its proper object; it will introduce its idea unto the mind, which will never depart from it. So will carnal love, or the impetuous working of men's lusts by that affection; hence Peter tells us, that some men have "eyes full of adultery;" therefore are they constantly unquiet, "and cannot cease from sin." There is such a mixture of lust and its object in their minds, that they continually commit lewdness in themselves. In a similar manner spiritual love, set on work by faith, will bring in an idea of the beloved object into the mind, until the eye be full of it, and the soul is continually conversant with it. Our apostle expresseth his great love to Christ above himself and all the world, as a fruit of his faith in him; Phil. ii, 8, 9. The sufferings, death, and resurrection of Christ, he knew and believed before; but he aims at more, he would have a farther inward experience of the power of his resurrection; that is, he would so mix it with

faith by love to Christ, as that it might produce in him its proper effects, an increase of spiritual life, all holiness and obedience. He would also be yet farther acquainted with the fellowship of his sufferings; or obtain communion with him in them; that the sufferings of Christ, subsisting in the Spirit by faith, might cause sin to suffer in him, and crucify the world to him, and him to the world. By all which he aimed to be made completely conformable to Christ; that his life, sufferings, and death might so abide in him, that his whole soul might be cast into his image and likeness.

VERSE 5.

*For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.*

§1--9. (I.) The words explained. §10--13. (II.) Observations. 1. The state of believers under the gospel is a state of blessed rest; God's rest and theirs. §14. There is a mutual inbeing of the promise and threatenings of the covenant. §15--17. Other observations.

§1. (I.) **H**AVING declared the danger of unbelief from the sin and punishment of others, he proceeds from the same words and example to give them encouragements to faith and obedience. But withal foreseeing that an objection might be raised against the very foundation of his arguments and exhortation; he diverts to the removal of it, and therein wonderfully strengthens and confirms his whole design. The foundation of the whole ensuing discourse lies in this, that there is a promise left us of entering into the rest of God; ver, 1; we ought, therefore, to take heed, that we come not short of it by unbelief. The Hebrews might object, that they were now concerned in the promise, especially in what is said of it in the Psalms.

He, therefore, manifests that there was yet another rest remaining for the people of God, and was referred to even in the words of the psalmist, a spiritual rest yet abiding for believers, to which we are called, and into which we are urged to seek an entrance.

This rest then, we say, primarily and principally is that spiritual rest of God, which believers obtain by Jesus Christ, in the faith and worship of the gospel; and is not to be restrained to their eternal rest in heaven. This, therefore, is the import of the apostle's assertion. We who have believed in Jesus Christ, have through the gospel an entrance given us, into that blessed state of rest in the worship of God which was of old promised; Luke i, 69—73. And as for those who will not take up their rest herein, that accept not of the work he hath wrought, and the atonement he hath made by faith, there remains no more sacrifice for their sin, but perish they must forever.

§2. There only remains, for the full explication of this assertion, that we shew what it is to enter into this rest. And,

1. It is an entrance, which denotes a right executed. There was a right proposed in this promise but it is not executed, or possession is not given but by believing. It is faith which gives us (*jus in re*) a right in possession, an actual personal interest, both in the promises and in the rest contained in them, with all the privileges wherewith it is attended.

2. It is but an entrance into rest;—because the rest itself is not absolute and complete. Look to what is past, what we are delivered from, and it is a glorious rest, but look to what is future, and it is itself but a passage into a more glorious rest.—Another reason is because we meet with contests and oppositions in this state. As the Israelites after they had passed over Jor-

dan, and according to the promise were entered into the rest of God, yet had great work to do in securing and preserving the possession which they had taken by faith; so is our entrance into the rest of God in this world; we have yet spiritual adversaries to conflict with, and the utmost of our spiritual endeavors are required to secure our possession, and to carry us on to perfect rest.

§3. As he said, as I have sworn in my wrath, if they "shall enter into my rest." How is it proved that we who believe shall enter into rest? Because God swore concerning others, that they should not do so. The apostle's argument depends upon a known rule; that to things immediately contrary, contrary attributes may be certainly ascribed; so that he who affirms the one, at the same denies the other; and he that denies the one, affirms the other. He that says it is day, doth as really say it is not night, as if he used those formal words. Now the proposition laid down by the apostle in proof of his assertion is this, they who believed not, did not enter into God's rest; for God swore that they should not, because they believed not. Hence it follows inevitably, in a just ratiocination, that "they who do believe, do enter into that rest;" for the promise being the same, if unbelief exclude, faith gives entrance. And here, by the way, we may take notice of the use of reason, or logical deductions, in proposing and confirming of supernatural truths, or articles of faith. For the validity of the apostle's proof in this place, depends on the certainty of the logical maxim before mentioned, the consideration of which removes its whole difficulty. And to deny this liberty of deducing consequences according to the just rules of ratiocination, is quite to take away the use of the scriptures, and to banish reason from those things wherein



it ought to be principally employed. Besides the covenant of God is administered to us in promises and threatenings; they all have the same end allotted them, and the same grace to make them effectual. Hence every threatening includes a promise in it, and every promise in its proposal hath also the nature of a threatening. There is a natural inbeing of promises and threatenings, in reference to the ends of the covenant; God expressing his mind in various ways, hath still the same end in them all. The first covenant was given out in a mere word of threatening; "the day thou eatest thou shalt die;" yet no one doubteth but that there was a promise of life upon obedience included in threatening, yea and principally intended. So there is a threatening in every promise of the gospel. Whereas, therefore, there is a great threatening confirmed with the oath of God in these words, that those who believed not, should not enter into his rest; there is a promise included in the same words, no less solemnly confirmed, "that believers should enter into rest."

§4. "Although the works were finished from the foundation of the world." It is evident that the apostle here undertakes to confirm what he had laid down in the foregoing verses, viz. that there is yet under the gospel a promise of entering into the rest of God remaining for believers, and that they do enter into that rest, by mixing the promise of it with faith. This he proves by a testimony out of the ninety-fifth Psalm. "But that rest, it might be said, seems to have been long since past and enjoyed;" to remove this objection, he proceeds to the exposition and vindication of that testimony, in which he shews, that no other rest is intended in them, but the rest of God and of his people in the gospel; and which he proves by various

arguments, laying singular weight upon this matter. For if there was a new rest promised, and they mixed not the promise of it with faith, during the continuance of God's patience towards them, they must perish eternally. The general argument he insists on, consists in an enumeration of the several rests of God, and of his people, mentioned in scripture; and from the consideration of them all, he proves, that no other rest could be principally intended in the words of David, but of the gospel into which Christian believers enter, and of which all others were striking representations. In pursuit of his design the apostle declares in particular,

1. That the rest mentioned in the Psalm, is not that which ensued immediately on the creation; because it is spoken of a long time after, and to another purpose, verses 4, 5.

2. That it is not the rest of the land of Canaan, because that was not entered into by them to whom it was promised; for they came short of it by their unbelief, and perished in the wilderness; but now this rest is offered afresh, ver. 6, 7.

3. Whereas it may be objected, that "although the wilderness-generation entered not in, yet their posterity did, under the conduct of Joshua," verse 8. He answers, that this rest being promised and proposed by David, so long a time (above 400 years) after the people had quietly possessed the land into which they were conducted by Joshua, it must needs be, that another rest *yet to come* was intended in those words, ver. 9. And,

4. To conclude his arguments, he declareth, that this new rest hath a *new peculiar foundation*; the author of it "ceasing from his own work," and "entering into his rest," ver. 10.

§5. But we are yet farther to inquire into the nature of the several rests here referred to, with their mutual relation; and some light into the whole may be given in the ensuing propositions:

1. The rest of God is the foundation and principal cause of our rest; "if they shall enter into *my rest*." It is on some account or other *God's* rest before it is *ours*.

2. God's rest is not spoken of absolutely with respect to himself *only*; but with reference to that which ensued thereon for the church. Hence it follows, that the rests here mentioned are as it were *double*; for instance, at the finishing of the works of creation, which is first proposed, God ceased from his work and rested; this was his *own* rest; "he rested on the seventh day." But that was not all; he blessed it for the rest of *man*, as an expressive representation, and a means, of our being taken into a *participation* of the rest of God.

3. The apostle proposeth to consideration, the *three-fold state* of the church—that under the *law of nature*, or creation—that under the *law of institution*, or carnal ordinances—and that now introduced under the gospel. To *each* of these he assigns a distinct rest of *God*; and a rest of the *church* entering into God's rest; and a *day* of rest as a means and pledge thereof.

§6. 1. He considers the church and the state of it under the law of nature, before the entrance of sin. And herein he shews, first, that there was a rest of God; "for the works, saith he, were finished from the foundation of the world," and "God did rest from all his works," ver. 3, 4. This was God's *own* rest, and was the foundation of the *church's* rest. For it was the duty of man hereon, to enter into the rest of God, that is, to make God his rest, here in faith and

obedience, and hereafter in immediate fruition; hence a *day* of rest, the seventh day, was blessed and sanctified for the present means of entering into the rest of God, in the performance of his worship, and as a pledge of its eternal fulness and continuance, ver. 3, 4. So that in this state of the church there were three things considerable,—*God's rest*—*Man's entering into that rest*—*a day of rest*, as a remembrance of the one and a pledge of the other; in all which there was a type of our rest under the gospel, wherein Immanuel (God with us) doth cease from *his work*, and therein lays the foundation of the rests ensuing. Again.

§7. 2. He considers the church under the *law of institution*; (and herein he representeth the rest of Canaan;) wherein also the three distinct rests before mentioned occur—there was in it a rest of God; this gives denomination to the whole; for he still calls it “my rest;” and God wrought, with respect to it great and mighty works, and ceased from them when they were finished, which answered the work of creation, to which it is compared by himself, Isa. li, 15, 16. “I am the Lord thy God that divided the sea, whose waves roared: the Lord of Hosts is his name. And I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundation of the earth, and say unto Zion, thou art my people.” On the finishing of this work, he “entered into his rest;” for after the erection of his worship in the land of Canaan, he said of it, “this is *my rest*, and here will I dwell.” Psal. cxxxii, 14. Hence, God being thus entered into *his rest*, in like manner as before, two things ensued;—that the people are invited to enter into the same, that is, by faith and obedience to participate of his appointed worship, wherein he rested; which though some

came short of by unbelief, yet others entered into it under the conduct of Joshua. Hence also ensued—a *day* of rest; that it might be a token and a pledge of his own rest in his instituted worship, and be a means in the solemn observance of it, to farther their entrance into the rest of God; and this became a peculiar *sign* that he was *their God*, and that they were *his people*. It is true, this day was the same, in the order of the days, from the foundation of the world; but yet it was now re-established upon new considerations. The time of *altering* the day was not yet come; for this work was but *preparatory* for a greater; and whereas, both the rests were designed to represent the rest of the gospel, it was meet they should agree in the common pledge and token of them. Besides, the *covenant* whereunto the *seventh* day was originally annexed, was not yet abolished; and therefore, that day way not yet to be changed. Hence the seventh day fell under a double consideration;—As it was a requisite proportion of time for the worship of God, and appointed as a pledge of his rest under the law of creation, wherein it had respect to God's rest from the works of creation *alone*;—And as it received a new institution, with *superadded* ends and significations, as a token and pledge of God's rest under a law of institutions. But materially the day was to be the same, until that work was done, and that rest was brought in, which both of them did signify. Thus, in each of these states of the church there was—A *rest of God* for their foundation;—A *rest in obedience* and worship for the people to enter into;—And a *day of rest*, as a pledge and token of both the other.

§8. The apostle farther proves, from the words of the psalmist, that yet there was to be a third state of the church, an especial state under the Messiah, of

which the others were only types and shadows. Now to the constitution of this rest, as before, three things are required. That there be some signal work of God; and this being finished—That there must be a spiritual rest arising thence, for believers to enter into; and —That there be a renewed day of rest, to express the rest of God to us, and to be a means and pledge of our entering into it. And that all these concur in this new state of the church, it is the apostle's design to demonstrate. And to this end he sheweth;—that there is a great work of God finished, for the foundation of the whole. As God wrought in the creation of all; so Christ, who is God, wrought in the setting up of this new church state; and, upon his completing it, he entered into his rest; ceasing from his works, as God also did from his creation-work, ver. 10. That hence follows a rest for the people of God; and—That there must be a new day of rest, suited to this new church state, which must arise from the rest that Christ entered into, when he had finished the work, whereby that new church-state was founded. This is the sabbath keeping which the apostle concludes he had evinced from the former discourse, ver. 9.

§9. And concerning this day we must observe,

1. That this, in common with the former days, is a sabbatism, or one day in seven, for this portion of time to be dedicated for the purposes of rest, having its foundation in the law of nature, was equally to pass through all states of the church.

2. That whereas both the former states of the church had one and the same day, though varied as to some ends in the latter institution; now the day itself is changed, because it respects a work quite of a different nature, as its foundation, than that day did which went before.

3. That the observation of it is suited to the spiritual state of the church under the gospel, delivered from the slavish frame of spirit wherewith it was observed under the law. These are the rests the apostle here treats of; a three-fold rest under a three-fold state of the church; and if any of these be left out of our consideration, the whole structure of the discourse is dissolved.

§10. (II.) *Obs.* 1. The state of believers under the gospel, is a state of blessed rest; it is God's rest and theirs. God created man in a state of present rest; and, as a token of it, instituted the seventh day, that man by his example and command might improve it. Now this rest consisted in peace with God, satisfaction and communion; which were lost by the entrance of sin, and all mankind were brought thereby into an estate of trouble and disquietment. In the restoration of these, in a better and more secure way, doth this gospel state of believers consist.

1. Without it our moral state, in respect to God, is an estate of enmity and trouble; and there is no peace between God and sinners: they exercise enmity against God by sin, Rom, viii, 7, and God executeth righteous enmity against them by the threats and curses of the law, John iii, 36. Hence nothing ensues to the guilty but trouble, fear, disquietment, and anguish of mind; but all is removed by the gospel; for being justified by faith we have peace with God, Rom. v, 1. Jesus Christ then is our peace, who hath reconciled us to God by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby, Ephes. ii, 14, 15.

2. There is in all men before the coming of the gospel, a want of acquiescency and satisfaction in God. This is produced by the corrupt principle and power of sin, which having turned off the soul from God,

causeth it to wander in endless vanities, and to pursue various lusts and pleasures, seeking after rest which always flees from it. This is the great real active principle of disquietment to the souls of men, which makes them like a "troubled sea that cannot rest;" and is there, can there be any peace or happiness in such a condition? But this also is removed by the gospel, for its work is to destroy and ruin that power of sin, which hath thus turned off the soul from God, and to renew his image in it, that it may make him its ultimate and eternal rest. This is the glorious effect of the gospel, to take men off from their principle of alienation from God, to turn their minds and affections to him as their rest, satisfaction, and reward; and other way under heaven for these ends there is none.

3. To peace with God, and acquiescency in him, a way of intercourse and communion is required to complete a state of spiritual rest; and this, as it was lost by sin, is also restored by the gospel.

§12. It is true we are told, That in the world we shall find *trouble*, but it is also told us, That in Christ we shall have *peace*, John xvi, 33. The rest we treat of, is *spiritual*: God's rest, and our rest in God; and therefore is not inconsistent with *outward trouble*, Rom. viii, 35—39. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us: for I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." The sum of all is this, that no outward thing, no possible opposition, shall prevail to cast us



out of that rest which we have obtained, or impede our future entrance into eternal rest with God. And as our peace with God in Christ can neither be weakened or impaired by outward troubles; so it supplies us with such present joys, and infallible future expectations, as enables us both to glory in them, and triumph over them, Rom. v, 3—5. 'If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you,' 1 Pet. iv, 14. Whatever evil and trouble may befall us on account of the gospel, *adds* to that blessed state of rest whereinto we are entered; for therein 'the Spirit of glory and of God resteth on us;' the special work of the Spirit of God, who works *gloriously* in them, supporting, comforting, and powerfully enabling them to preserve their souls in this state of rest, which cannot be impeached with any outward troubles.

§13. But how does it seem inwardly and spiritually to answer the description now given of it? For are there not many true believers who all their days never come to any abiding sense of peace with God, but are filled with trouble, and exercised with fears and perplexities, so that they go mourning and heavily all their days? But we should not forget that it is one thing to be in a *state* of rest, and another to *know* that a man is possessed of it. Believers are by faith instated in rest, being reconciled to God by the blood of the cross; but all may not have *actual* rest in all particulars; nay, a state of rest in *general* may admit of much actual disquietment; whereby the state itself is not overthrown, nor the interests of any in it disannulled. There is a great difference between a state itself, and men's participations of that state. This gospel state of itself is an estate of complete peace and rest; but our participation of it is various and gradual. A full rest in it is

provided and exhibited; but this we receive according to our several measures and attainments. Let it be remembered, that our whole interest in this rest is called 'our entrance,' we do enter, and we do but enter; we are so possessed of it, as that we are continually entering into it.

§14. *Obs. 2.* There is a mutual inbeing of the promises and threatenings of the covenant, so that in our faith and consideration of them they ought not utterly to be separated. Wherever there is a promise, there a threatening in reference to the same matter is tacitly understood; and wherever there is a threatening, be it never so severe, there is a gracious promise included in it. Yea, sometimes God gives out an express threatening for no other end but that men may lay hold on the promise tacitly included. The threatening that Nineveh should perish, was given out that it might not perish; and John the Baptist's preaching, that the "axe was laid to the root of the tree," was a call to repentance, that none might be cut down and cast into the fire. And the reasons hereof are,—because both promises and threatenings flow from the same source, and are expressive of the holy gracious nature of God, with respect to his actings towards men in covenant with himself. Both of them as annexed to the covenant, have the same end. The use of divine threatenings, for instance, is no other than to make such a representation of God's holiness and righteousness to men, as that being "moved by fear," they may be stirred up to faith and obedience. So Noah, upon God's warning, that is, his threatening the world with destruction, being "moved by fear, prepared an ark," Heb. xi, 7.—The same grace is administered in the covenant to make the one and the other effectual. Men are apt to think that the promises of the gospel

are accompanied towards the elect, with a supply of effectual grace to render them useful, to enable them to believe and obey; this makes them to hear them willingly, and attend to them gladly; they think they can never enough consider or meditate upon their contents; but as for the threatenings of the gospel, they suppose they have no other end but to make them afraid. This, however, is a great mistake; threatenings are no less sanctified of God, for the ends mentioned, than promises are; nor are they, when duly used and improved, less effectual to that purpose: and there can be no reason why men should dislike the preaching and consideration of them, but because they too well like the sins and evils against which they are levelled.

§15. *Obs.* 3. God hath shewed us in his own example, that work and labor is to precede our rest. This he plainly declares in the fourth commandment, where the reason he gives why we ought, in a returning course, to attend to six days of labor before we sanctify a day of rest, is because he wrought himself six days, and then entered into his rest, Exod. xx, 9—11. But now there is an alteration under the gospel. The day of rest under the law, as a pledge of final rest with God, was the seventh day; but under the gospel it is the first day of the seven. Then the week of labor went before, now it follows after; and the reason hereof seems to be taken from the different state of the church; for of old, under the covenant of works, men were absolutely to labor, without any alteration of their condition, before they entered into rest; they would have had only a continuance of their state whercin they first set out, but no rest until they had wrought for it; the six days of labor went before, and the day of rest followed; but now it is otherwise; the first thing that belongs to our present state, is an enter-

ing into rest initially, for we enter in by faith; and then our working ensues, that is, the obedience of faith. Rest is given us to set us on work; and our works are such, as for the manner of their performance are consistent with a state of rest; hence our day of rest goes before our days of labor; and those who contend now for the observation of the seventh, do endeavor to bring us again under the covenant of works, that we should do all our works before we should enter into any rest at all.

§16. But it will be objected, "That this is contrary to our former observation, that, after the example of God, we must work before we enter into rest." To this I answer: The rest intended in the proposition is absolutely complete and perfect; the rest which is to be enjoyed with God for ever. Now, antecedent to the enjoyment of that, all our works performed in a state of initial rest must be wrought; and although we are here in a state of rest; in comparison of what went before, yet this also is a state of working with respect to that fulness of everlasting rest ensuing. We are not only to do, but also to suffer, this way is marked out for us; let us pursue it patiently, that we answer the example, and be like our heavenly Father. Again,

§17. *Obs.* 4. All the works of God are perfect; he finished them, and said that they were good; "He is the rock, and his work is perfect," Deut. xxxii, 4. His infinite wisdom and power require that it should be so, and make it impossible that it should be otherwise. The conception of them is perfect in the infinite counsel of his will; and the operation of them is perfect, through his infinite power. Nothing can proceed from him, but what is so in its own kind and measure, and the whole of his works is so absolutely,

see Isa. xl, 27, 28. As when he undertook the work of creation, he finished it in such a manner, that it was in his own eyes exceedingly good; so the works of grace and providence, which are yet, as it were, upon the wheel, shall in like manner be accomplished. And this may teach us at all times to trust him with his own works, and all our concerns in them, whether they be the works of his grace in our hearts, or the works of his providence in the world. "He will perfect that which concerneth us, because his mercy endureth for ever, and will not forsake the works of his own hands," Psalm cxxxviii, 8.

## VERSE 4, 5.

*For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest.*

§1. (I.) The words explained. The manner and subject of the present testimony. §2. The testimony itself. §3. Another corroborating testimony. §4. (II.) Observations. 1. Whatever the scripture saith, in any place, is a firm foundation of faith. §5. 2. Every thing in the worship of God should rest on divine authority.

§1. (I.) "FOR he spake in a certain place." (Εἰρηκε, *dixit*) said; the nominative case is not expressed, either the *scripture* hath said, which is not dead and mute, but living and vocal, even the voice of God, to them who have ears to hear; or it may be (τις) a *certain man* said; or, *he* hath said, that is, *God* himself, the Holy Ghost: or it is taken impersonally, for (*dicitur,*) *it is said* (πρ, *alicubi, in quodam loco,*) *somewhere*, in a certain place. The sum is, that there was *a rest* of God and his people, and also *a day* of rest, from the foundation of the world, which was *not* the rest here mentioned by the psalmist, as he allegeth

not his *author* expressly, neither doth he the particular *place* where the words are recorded, referring the Hebrews to the scripture, which was the common acknowledged principle of truth between them, which he and they would acquiesce in, and wherein they were versed; at least in the books of Moses, and particularly in the history of the creation, whence these words are taken, Gen. ii, 2.

(Περί της εβδομης, *de die septima*, or *de septima*) of the *seventh day*. The *seventh* (εβδομη) may be used either *naturally* and absolutely for (η ημερα η εβδομη) the *seventh day*, that is, from the beginning of the creation, wherein the first complete returning course of time was finished; after which, a return is made to the first day again; or, it may be used *artificially*, as a notation of a certain day peculiarly so called; or, as the *name* of one day, as most nations have given names to the weekly course of days; for at that time (η εβδομαδη) the *seventh* was the name whereby the Hellenists called the *sabbath day*. So it is always termed by PHILO, as others have observed; which (by the way) is no small evidence that this epistle was originally written in the Greek tongue. So in the gospel (μια σαββατων) *one*, or, *the first of the week*, is the notation of the *Lord's day*. We should remember that it is the *sabbath* of which the apostle is speaking, and it respects both the rest of God, and the rest appointed for us thereon. God made way for his creatures to enter into his rest, and gave them a day as a pledge thereof. (Ούτως) *on this wise*, or, *to this purpose*, either as precisely denoting the *words*, or, as respecting the *substance* of them.

§2. The testimony itself ensues; 'And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.' The apostle intends not only to use the *mere words* he cites, but in

them he directs us to the *whole passage* whereof they are a part; for it would not answer his purpose to shew merely that God rested from his works, which these words affirm; but his aim is to manifest, that thereon there was a rest provided for us to enter into, and a day of rest appointed as a pledge thereof; and this is fully expressed in the place referred to, for God upon his own rest blessed the seventh day and sanctified it.

(Κατεπαυσεν ο Θεος) “*God rested.*” A cessation from work, and not a refreshment upon weariness, is intended. God is not weary; he is no more so in the work of creation, than he is in the work of providence, Isa. xl. 20. ‘The Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, nor is weary:’ he laboreth not in working; and therefore nothing is intended but a cessation from exerting his creating power to the production of more creatures, with his satisfaction in what he had already done. JUNIUS renders it, (*cum autem perfecisset Deus die septimo opus suum quod fecerat, quievit,*) “When God had perfected his work, on the seventh day, he rested;” thus the seventh day is not expressed as a time wherein any work was done, but as the time immediately present after it was finished; and the word here used (כלה) doth not properly signify to *work*, or effect, but to “complete,” perfect, or accomplish; “when he had *perfected* his work;” so that on the seventh day there was no more work to do. This then is the sum of what is here laid down; That from the beginning, from the foundation of the world, there was a *work* of God, and a *rest* ensuing thereon; and an *entrance* proposed to *men* into that rest, and a *day* of rest, as a pledge thereof; which yet was not the rest intended by the psalmist, as in the next verse.

§3. “And in this place again, if they shall enter into my rest.” (*Και εν τζυλω,*) and *in this*. The expression is elliptical, and the sense is to be supplied from the beginning of the fourth verse; “For he spake in a certain place; and again he spake in this place.”—‘If they shall enter into my rest.’ He takes it for granted, that an entrance into the rest of God for some is intended in those very words, whereby others were excluded. This present argument is from the *time* when, and *place* where these words were spoken, which include *a rest of God to be entered into*. Now this was the time of Moses, and in the wilderness, so that they cannot intend the sabbatical rest from the foundation of the world; for the works, saith he, were finished in six days, and the seventh was blessed and sanctified for a day of rest, as Moses testifieth, Gen. ii, 1—3. And as this was tendered, and entered into by some, from the foundation of the world; it must, therefore, of necessity be *another rest*, that is spoken of by the psalmist, and to which the people were *afresh* invited. This is therefore his purpose in the repetition of this testimony, that the rest mentioned therein, was not that which was *appointed from the beginning* of the world; but another, the *proposal of which yet remained*. So then, upon the whole, there was *another rest of God*, besides that upon the creation of all, as is evident from this place, which he farther confirms in the next verse.

§4. (II.) The observations that offer themselves are the following:

*Obs. 1.* Whatever the scripture saith in *any place*, being rightly understood and applied, is a firm foundation for faith to rest upon: and for arguments or proofs, in matters of divine worship, to be deduced from. Thus the apostle here confirms his own pur-



pose and intention. His aim is to settle the judgment of these Hebrews in things pertaining to the worship of God; and to supply them with a *sufficient authority*, which their faith might be resolved on to. This he doth by referring them to "a certain place of scripture," where the truths he urgeth are confirmed; for he designed to deal with these Hebrews, not merely upon his apostolic authority, and the revelation he had received from Jesus Christ, as he used to deal with the Gentile churches, but on the common principles of the Old Testament scriptures, which were mutually acknowledged by him and them. It is utterly impossible that, in things concerning religion and the worship of God, we can ever be engaged in a cause attended with more difficulties, and liable to more specious opposition, than that which our apostle was now managing. He had the *practice* of the church, continued from the first foundation of it, resolved into the authority of God himself as to its institution, and attended with his acceptance of the worshippers in all ages, with other seeming disadvantages and prejudices innumerable, to contend with; yet this he undertakes on the sole authority of the scriptures, and testimonies to his purpose deduced thence, and gloriously accomplisheth his design. Certainly, whilst we have the same warranty of the word for what we avow and profess, we need not despond for those mean artifices and pretences wherewith we are opposed, which bear no proportion to those difficulties, which by the same word of truth have been conquered and removed. For instance, what force is there in the pretence of the Roman church, in their profession of things found out, appointed, and commanded by themselves, in comparison of that of the Hebrews for theirs, begun and continued by the authority of God himself? And if *this*

hath been taken away by the light and authority of the scriptures, how can the *other*, hay and stubble, stand before it?

§5. *Obs. 2.* It is to no purpose to press any thing in the worship of God, without producing the *authority* of God for it in his word. Our apostle still minds the Hebrews what is “spoken” in this and that place to his purpose. And to what end serves any thing else in this matter? Is there any thing else that we can resolve our faith into, or that can influence our consciences into a religious obedience? And are not these things the life and soul of worship, without which it is but, as it were, a dead carcass?

VERSE 6.

*Seeing, therefore, it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached, entered not in because of unbelief.*

§1. Connexion of the words. §2. The argument recapitulated. §3. Observation. §4. Farther observations and rules to elucidate the general observation. 1 Promises refer either to the grace only, or the outward administration of the covenant. §5. 2 Some may be accomplished when few know it. §6. 30. Some confined to a certain time §7. 4. Some not limited. §8. 5. Some for a time suspended. §9. Inferences.

§1. **H**AVING thus removed an objection that might arise against the new proposal of a *rest of God*, from the *sabbatical rest*, which was appointed from the foundation of the world; and manifested that—although there was in the state of nature, or under the law of our creation, a *working* and *rest of God*, and a *rest for men* to enter into, and a day set apart as a pledge of that rest; yet—this was not the rest which he inquired after; the apostle in this and the following verses proceeds to improve his testimonies already produced to a farther end; namely to prove, that—al-

though after the original rest was mentioned, there was a *second* rest promised and proposed to the people of God; yet—neither was that *it* which is proposed in the place of the Psalm; but a *third*, that yet remained for them, and was now proposed, under the same promises and threatenings with the former. The words contain an *assertion*, and a particular *assumption* from it; the assertion is, that “some must or shall enter into the rest of God;” which he concludes as evinced by his former arguments and testimonies: so the words prove, that there is yet a *remaining entrance* into a rest of God. A promise being included in every conditional threatening, the sense of these words then is, that from what hath been spoken it is evident, that some must yet enter into another rest of God, besides that which was in the sabbath appointed from the foundation of the world.—His *assumption* is, that those to whom that rest was first preached *entered not in*, because of their disobedience. It is manifest that the apostle intends in these words, those who came out of Egypt under the conduct of Moses, whose sin and punishment he had so fully expressed in the foregoing chapter. Now to *these* was the rest of God *first declared*; they were *first* evangelized with it. And hereby the apostle shews, which rest it is that he intends; not *absolutely* the *spiritual rest* of the promise, for this was preached to believers from the foundation of the world; but the *church rest* of the land of Canaan, that is the *accomplishment of the promise* upon their faith and obedience, was first proposed to them, for otherwise the *promise itself* was first given to Abraham, but the actual accomplishment of it was never proposed to him on any condition.

§2. This therefore; is the substance of this verse; beside the rest of God, from the foundation of the

world, and the institution of the seventh day sabbath, as a pledge thereof; there was another rest for men to enter into; the rest of God and his worship in the land of Canaan. This being proposed to the people of old, they entered not into it by reason of unbelief; therefore there must be yet that other rest remaining, which he provokes the Hebrews to labor for an entrance into. And the ground of his argument lies here; in that the rest of Canaan, although it was a distinct rest of itself, was typical of that rest which he is inquiring after; and the good things of this new rest were obscurely represented to the people therein; so that by rejecting the one, they rejected the virtue and benefit of the other also. Hence,

§3. *Obs.* The faithfulness of God in his promises is not to be measured by the faith or obedience of men, at any one season, in any one generation, or their sins whereby they come short of them, nor by any providential dispensation towards them. The people in the wilderness having a promise proposed to them of entering into the rest of God, when they all failed and came short of it, there was an *appearance* of the failure of the promise itself, so they seem themselves to have tacitly charged God,—when he pronounced the irrevocable sentence against their entering into the land of promise. For after the declaration of it, he adds, “and ye shall know my breach of promise,” Num. xvi; 34; which is a severe *ironical* reproof of them. They seemed to have argued, that if they *entered not*, God *failed* in his promise, and so reflected on his truth and veracity. That, saith God, shall be known when you are utterly destroyed; for then it was that it should be accomplished. You shall know that it is owing to your sin, unbelief, and rebellion, and not any failure on my part.

§4. To help us in the discharge of our duty herein, we may take the help of the ensuing observations and rules:

1. The promises of God are either such as belong only to the grace of the covenant, or such as respect also the outward *administration* of it in this world. Those of the *first sort* are at all times, actually fulfilled, and made good to all believers, by virtue of their union to Christ, whether themselves have the sense and comfort of that accomplishment in their own souls at all times or no. But besides these there are promises which respect the *outward administration* of the covenant under the providence of God in this world; such are all those which concern the peace and prosperity of the church, its deliverance out of trouble, the increase of light and truth in the world, the joy and comfort of believers therein, with others innumerable of the like import; and it is concerning *these* we speak.

§5. 2. Some, yea many, promises of God may have a full accomplishment; when very few know or take notice that they are so; it may be none at all. For *such things* may in the providence of God fall out in the accomplishment as may keep men from discerning it. Thus when God came to fulfil his promise in the deliverance of this people from Egypt, he suffered at the same time their bondage and misery to be so increased, that they could not believe it. Exod. v, 21—23; God answers the desires of his church; but how? “By terrible things in righteousness,” Psal. lxxv, 5. It is in *righteousness* that he answers them; the righteousness of fidelity and veracity in the accomplishment of his promises. But withal he sees it necessary in his holiness and wisdom, to mix it with such “terrible things” in the works of his providence, as make their hearts to tremble, so that at the present they take little

notice of the love, grace, and mercy of the promise. It, moreover, so falls out from the *prejudicate opinions* of men concerning the sense and peculiar meaning of the promises, or the nature of the things promised. They apprehend them to be one thing, and in the event they prove another, which makes them either utterly reject them, or not to see their accomplishment. So was it, for instance, with respect to the coming of Christ in the flesh, according to the promise.—Again, Unbelief itself hides the accomplishment of promises from the eyes of men. So our Lord speaking of his coming to avenge his elect, adds “nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” Luke xviii, 8; men will not apprehend nor understand his work through unbelief.

And this one consideration should teach us great moderation in our judgments concerning the *application* of promises and predictions with regard to their *seasons*. I am persuaded that many have contended (thereby troubling themselves and others) about the seasons and times wherein some prophecies are to be fulfilled, which have *long since received* their principal accomplishment, in such a way as those who now contend about them think not of.—That God is faithful in all his promises and predictions, that they shall every one of them be accomplished in their proper season, that the things contained in them, and intended by them are all fruits of his love and care towards his church, that they all tend to the advancement of that glory which he hath designed for himself by Jesus Christ,—these are things that ought to be certain and fixed with us; but beyond these limits we ought to be guarded by peculiar caution, the analogy of faith, modesty, and patience;—prophecies not being the *rule of any actions*.

§6. 3. Some promises of God, as to their full accomplishment, may be confined to *some certain time* and season, although they have their use and benefit in all seasons; until this is come there can be no failure charged, though they be not fulfilled. Thus was it with the great promise of the coming of Christ before mentioned, it was given out from the foundation of the world, Gen. iii, 15; and in the counsel of God confined to a certain period of time, determined afterwards in the prophecies of Jacob, Daniel, Haggai, &c. This all the saints of God were in expectation of, from the first giving of the promise itself. So did God order things, that they should depend on his absolute sovereignty; and neither make haste nor despond. And yet, doubtless, through the delay they apprehended in the accomplishment of the promise, some of them fell into *one* of these extremes, and some into the *other*; but there was no alteration in God or his word all this while.—Now what shall men do in reference to such promises, when they know not by any means the set time of their accomplishments? Let them believe and pray; and take the encouragement given, Isa. lx, 22, “I the Lord will hasten it in his time.” It hath its appointed time, which cannot be changed; but if you consider the oppositions that lie against it, the unlikelihood of its accomplishment, the want of all outward means for it; upon faith and prayer it shall be hastened. Thus, in the days of the gospel, there are signal promises remaining concerning the calling of the Jews, the destruction of antichrist, the peace and glory of the churches of Christ. We know how some have precipitately *antedated* these things; whose disappointments, and their own unbelief and carnal wisdom, have brought the generality of men to look no more after them; and either to think that the

promises of them have failed, or that indeed such promises were never made; wherein unbelief have found many learned advocates. It is certain, however, that there are *periods of time* affixed to these things; the vision of them as yet is for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie; though it tarry, and be delayed beyond the *computation* of some, and the *expectation* of all; yet wait for it, because it will surely come; it will not tarry one moment beyond the time settled in heaven.

§7. 4. There are many promises, whose signal accomplishment God *hath not limited* to any special season; but keeps it in his own sovereign will to act according to them, towards his church, as is best suited to his wisdom and love: only there is no such promise made, but God will at one time or other verify his word in it, by acting according to it, or fulfilling it. And God hath thus disposed of things, that he may always have in readiness wherewith to manifest his displeasure against the sins of his own people,—that he may have wherewith to exercise their faith,—and to encourage them to prayerful expectation, and crying to him in their distresses.

§8. 5. Some concerns of the *glory of God* in the world may *suspend* the full and outward accomplishment of some promises for a season. Thus there are many promises made to the church of deliverance out of afflictions and persecutions, and of the destruction of its adversaries. When such occasions befall the church, it may and ought to plead these promises, for they are given for that purpose: but yet it often falls out, that the fulfilling of them is for a long time suspended; God hath *other ends* to accomplish by their sufferings than are yet effected; it is needful, it may be, that his grace should be glorified in their *patience*, and



the truth of the gospel be confirmed by their *sufferings*, and a testimony be borne against the world. It may be also, that God hath so ordained things, that the straits and persecutions of the church shall tend more to the furtherance of the gospel and the interest of Christ, than its peace and tranquillity would do; and in such a season God hath furnished his people with other promises which they ought to mix with faith; and which shall undoubtedly be accomplished.

§9. And we may learn hence,

1. In any condition wherein we judge ourselves to be called to *plead any promises of God*, and to have an expectation of their accomplishment, *not to make haste*. We see how many occasions there may be of retarding the actual accomplishment of promises; our wisdom and duty therefore is, to leave that to his sovereign pleasure, and to live upon his truth, goodness, and faithfulness in them. They shall all be hastened in their *appointed* time.

2. Again: when the accomplishment of promises seemeth to be deferred, we are *not to faint* in our duty. The benefit we have by the *accomplishment* of promises, is not the *sole end* why they are given us. God intends to exercise all our graces; our faith, patience, obedience, and submission. Something of this nature befell the "father of the faithful" himself; he had received the great promise that "*in his seed* all the nations of the earth should be blessed;" many years after this he was childless, until his own body (as well as Sarah's womb) was in a manner dead; his remaining hope was *above hope*, or all rational apparent grounds of it. This once put him so to it, that he cried, "Lord, what wilt thou do for me, seeing I go childless?" All this while God was bringing him "to his foot," training him up to obedience, submission,

and dependence upon himself. When therefore we consider any promises of God, and do not find ourselves actually possessed of the things promised; our duty is to apply ourselves to what in our *present* station is required of us, and not to *faint*, or *charge* the Lord as unjust, all whose ways are mercy and truth, and whose promises are firm and steadfast.

## VERSE 7.

*Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, to-day, after so long a time; as it is said, to-day, If ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.*

§1, 2. (I.) The words explained. §3. (II.) Observations. 1. In reading and hearing the scripture, we ought to consider that God speaks to us. §4. 2. The holy scripture is an inexhaustible repository of spiritual truths. §5. 3. Many important truths lie deep and secret in the scripture, and therefore require a very diligent search. §6. Use of reproof and direction.

§1. (I.) “**A**GIN, he limiteth a certain day.” (Πάλιν) *Again*; it may denote either the repetition of an *old act*, or the introduction of a *new testimony*; but it rather expresses here the *repetition* of the thing spoken, and is to be joined in construction with “he limiteth,” or “he limiteth again.”—(Οὐρίξει) “*He limiteth*,” that is, absolutely, God doth so, whose authority alone in these things is the rule of our faith and obedience, particularly the Holy Ghost; this limitation being made in the scriptures which were given by his immediate and peculiar inspiration, 2 Pet. i, 21. “*Limiteth*,” that is, either describes, or defineth it in a prophetic prediction, or determineth and appoints it by an authoritative institution. He *describes* it in itself, and *appoints* it unto us. The word may comprise both; and we have no ground to exclude either.

(Τινε ημεραν) *A certain day*; that is, another *determined* day, in answer to the days before-mentioned, and

whose season was now elapsed. It is certain that the apostle doth principally intend to evince, the *new rest of God* under the gospel, and to persuade the Hebrews to secure their *entrance* into it, and possession of it. But he here changeth his terms, and calls it not *a rest*, but proposeth it from the psalmist under the notion of *a day*, and this he doth because he had before proved and illustrated the *rest of God*, from the *day* that was set apart as a pledge and means of it, as also because he designs to manifest that there is *another day* determined, as a pledge and representation of this new rest, or as an especial season for the enjoyment of its privileges.

§2. (Ζημερον) *To-day*; the day he intends is that which in the psalmist is called (חיי) *to-day*, the former day he called (εβδομητην) the '*seventh*' day, but this new spiritual rest in Christ by the gospel, is to have *another day* to express it. Thus is '*to-day*' in the psalmist left at liberty to be *any day* in the prophecy, but limited to the *first* by the resurrection of Christ. 'Speaking in David,' who was the person by whom this matter was revealed to the church, in a psalm that he composed, by divine inspiration, for that purpose: for the scripture is the voice of God, and he always speaks to us thereby; and itself is said to speak, because of God's speaking in it. 'After so long a time;' the date of this time is to be taken either from the coming of the Israelites out of Egypt, or from the second year after, when the spies were sent to search the land; a space of about *five hundred years*; so that our apostle might well call it, '*after so long a time*;' or *so great* a space of time.

§3. (II.) The remaining words of this verse have been opened before; we shall therefore proceed to some improving observations:

*Obs.* 1. In reading and hearing the scripture, we ought to consider that God speaks to us in and by it.

'*He saith;*' that is, God saith; or, more especially, the Holy Ghost. He both spake *in* David, in the inspiration of that psalm; and *by* David, or, *in the psalm*, he spake to us. This alone will give us that reverence and subjection of soul and conscience to the word of God, which are required of us, and which are necessary, that we have benefit thereby. In that kind of careless deportment, whereby men hear the word and immediately lose it; this is not the least evil, that they do not sufficiently consider *whose word* it is, and who speaks it immediately to them; and to prevent this, God doth not only preface what he speaks with, 'Thus saith the Lord,' but oftentimes adjoins such of his attributes and excellencies, as are suited to beget an awe and reverence in our hearts, both of him that speaketh, and what is spoken.

§4. *Obs.* 2. The holy scripture is an inexhaustible repository of spiritual mysteries and sacred truths. We had never known what is in the Old Testament, had it not been for the New, Luke xxiv, 45, and we should never know fully what is in the New Testament, were it not for heaven and glory, where we shall know as we are known, 1 Cor. xiii, 12. It may be some will say, they can see none of these stores, can find little or nothing of these riches. It may be so; for this treasure is such, as men can see little of it if they have not a guide and a light. Let a treasury that is made deep, or closely immured, be filled never so full with gold and precious things, yet if you turn a man to it in the *dark*, he can see nothing that is desirable; but rather feel an horror and a fear come upon him. It is by the Spirit of Christ, and the light of the gospel, that this veil of darkness and blindness is taken away. But what are these excellencies and riches? We reply; here is the mystery of his *love*,

*grace, wisdom, righteousness, and holiness, in Christ Jesus.* There is in it the whole *counsel of God*, concerning his *own worship*, and the whole of that *obedience* which he requires of us, that we may come to be accepted with him here, and to the eternal enjoyment of him in glory. There is in it a glorious discovery of the *eternal Being*, or nature of God, with its glorious essential excellencies, so far as we are capable of an encouraging contemplation of them in this world. Again, the souls of believers are carried, by the aids of these revealed mysteries, out of this world, and have *future eternal glories* presented to them. Now, how large, how extensive, and unsearchable must that repository of mysterious truths be, wherein all these things, with all the particulars whereinto they branch themselves, all the whole intercourse between God and man in all ages are stored! O heavenly! O blessed *depositum* of Divine grace and goodness!

§5. *Obs. 3.* Many important truths lie deep and secret in the scripture, requiring a very diligent search in their investigation, and for their discovery. And the reason why in this place I insist on these things, is not so much to explain the sense of it, as to *vindicate* the way of our apostle's arguing, and of citing testimonies out of scripture, with his exposition and application of them. That which we are therefore to inquire into for our own advantage, is the ways and means whereby a *due search* may be made into the scriptures, and what is necessarily required thereto, so that we may not fail of light and instruction; and they are, amongst others, these that follow:

(1.) A humble, *teachable* frame of spirit; this is the great preparation for the soul's admittance into the **TREASURY** of sacred truths. Go to the reading, hearing, or studying of the scripture with hearts sensible of

your own unworthiness to be taught, of your disability to learn, ready to receive, embrace, and submit to what shall be made known to you; and this is the way to be taught of God: and suppose in this way you learn not so much as others, yet that which you *do learn* shall be of so much use and advantage to you, as theirs shall be who attain to the greatest degree of spiritual light and knowledge. The word inquired into will be as *manna* to them that gather it, Exod. xvi, 18.

(2.) *Earnest prayer* for the guidance, direction, assistance, and illumination of the Holy Ghost, to enable us to find out, discern, and understand the deep things of God. Where this is neglected, whatever we know we know it not as we ought. That this is the *only way* whereby we come to know the things of God, the great and wondrous things laid up in the word, our apostle shews at large, 1 Cor. ii, "The natural man," he tells us, that is, such as hath not the help and assistance of the Spirit of God, "cannot receive the things which are of God," ver. 14, he can neither *find* them out himself, nor *own* them when they are discovered by others; yea, woe be to him who leans to his own understanding in this weighty matter.

(3.) Endeavor, in all your inquiries into the word, to mind and *aim at the same ends* which God hath in the giving of it. *Then* do we comply with the will of God in what we do, and may comfortably expect his gracious assistance.

(4.) They that would search the scriptures to find out the sacred truths that lie hid in them, ought to take care that they entertain no *corrupt lusts* in their hearts or minds, which will certainly refuse to give admittance to spiritual truth when it is tendered to them. Love of sin will make all study of the scriptures to be

mere lost labor. Hearts pure and *undefiled*, minds serene and *heavenly*, so far as by the grace of God we can attain them, are required to this work; and it ought to be one great *motive* to an endeavor after them,—that we may be more able to discern the mind of God in his word.

(5.) *Sedulity* and *constancy* in this duty are great helps to a profitable discharge of it. When men read the word but seldom, so that the things of it are not familiar to them, they will be continually at a loss what they are about. Besides, there is not any thing in our walking before God that is more acceptable unto him; for this expresseth somewhat of that reverence which we ought to have of the greatness and holiness of Him with whom we have to do. The Jews' frontispiece to their great bible is that saying of Jacob upon the vision he had at Bethel, "How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." So ought we to look upon the word with an holy awe and reverence of the presence of God in it.

(6.) In our search after truth our minds are greatly to be influenced and guided by the *analogy of faith*; "he that prophesieth" that is, interpreteth scripture, must do it, (*Κατα την αναλογιαν της πιστewς*,) Rom. xii, 6. "According (say we) to the proportion of faith," or things to be believed. There is a harmony, an unanswerableness, a proportion, in the whole system of faith: particular places are so to be interpreted, as that they do not break and disturb their *order*; for all the scripture is from the same spring of divine inspiration, and is in all things perfectly consistent with itself; and the things of greatest importance are delivered in it plainly, clearly, and frequently. To these the sense of every particular place is to be reduced; none is to

be assigned to it, none to be pretended from it, that clashes with any of the truths elsewhere clearly and fully confirmed. For men to come to a place of scripture, it may be dark and *obscure in itself*, and through I know not what pretences draw a sense from it, which is inconsistent with other doctrines of faith elsewhere plainly revealed, is openly to corrupt the word of God. Want of a due attention to this rule is that which produced the most pestilent heresies in the church.

(7.) A due consideration of the *nature of the discourse* wherein any words are used, tends much to give light into their sense and import, whether historical, prophetic, &c. Now these things are duly to be weighed by them who intend to dig deep in this mine of sacred truth; but particular directions in reference to them are too many here to be insisted on.

(8.) The proper *grammatical sense* of the words themselves is duly to be inquired into; and this principally respects them who are able to pursue this search after truth in the *original* languages. Others also may have much help by comparing parallel places, even in *translations*, whence the proper sense or usual acceptance of any words may be learned.

§6. What hath been now spoken may serve, as for the *reproof* of some, so for the *direction* of others. Whence is it that some receive so little benefit by their studying the scriptures, at least in their pretending so to do? Alas! their manifold miscarriages are manifest to all; without diligence, without humility, without watching unto prayer, they go in the confidence of their own strength and abilities to search and expound it; which is to attempt the opening of brazen doors, without a key.



## VERSE 3.

*For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterwards have spoken of another day.*

§1—3. (I.) The interpretation of the words. §4. (II.) Observations.  
 1. There is no true rest for the souls of men but only in Jesus Christ by the gospel. §5. Improved. §6. 2. The gospel church state is a state of spiritual rest in Christ. §7. 3. It is a great privilege to have a day of rest.

§1. (I.) **I**N this verse the apostle gives a farther confirmation to his argument, by a particular application of it to the special matter in hand; and withal preventeth an objection, that might probably be raised against one part of his discourse. “For if Jesus had given them rest, &c.” (*κατέπαυσεν*) *caused them to rest.* The apostle even in this chapter useth this word both in a neutral and active signification, ver. 4. God *rested*; here “caused them to rest,” or “given them rest.” The word properly, and usually in other authors, signifies (*finem imponere, cessare facere*) *to put an end, or to make to cease*; as *rest* puts an end to labor. So the word is used, ver. 10, “Hath ceased from his works.”—(*Ἰησους*) *Jesus*; that is, Joshua; and by so calling him, the apostle also declares what was the true *Hebrew* name of *Jesus Christ*; the Greek names being alike, so were the Hebrew ones. Now as persons on great occasions had their names, as to their significations, *wholly* changed;—for instance, when in the Old Testament Jacob was called Israel, and Solomon, Jedediah; and in the New Testament Simon was called Peter, and Saul was called Paul; and as divers had *double* names occasionally given them, as Esther and Hadussa, Daniel and Belteshazzar:—so God was pleased sometimes to change *one letter* in a name, not without a mystical signification; as the

name of Abram was changed into Abraham; and that of Sarai into Sarah, Gen. xvii, 5—15; and *here* the name of Hosea is changed into Jehoshua, by the addition of one of the letters of the name of God increasing the signification; which name was given him as he was a type of Christ, or the typical Savior of the people. It is plain, that the reason of the name is taken from its signification of *saving*; *he shall save*, or, be the savior; and all the attempts that some have made to derive it from other words, are vain and frivolous; so also are theirs who would deduce the Greek name (Ιησους) *Jesus*, from (ἰάω, ἰάσω) *to heal*; for (Ιησους) *Jesus*, is of no signification at all in the Greek tongue, it being only their manner of pronouncing (ישוע) *Jeshua*, which is a *Savior*; and which was given to the Lord Christ because of the work he had to do; and to this *Jesus*, the son of Nun, his type, for the same reason.

§2. “He would not have spoken concerning another day.” The apostle having described the rest he speaks of by the special *day of rest* that was in the several states of the church peculiarly to be observed, now (by a synecdoche) he expresseth the *whole rest itself*, and all the concernments of it, by the name of a *day*. “*He would not have spoken;*” that is, either God absolutely, or the Holy Ghost, whose immediate work the inspiration of the psalmist was, whose words these are—“*After these things;*” the things which befel the people in the wilderness, and what they afterwards attained under the conduct of Joshua. The objection laid down, by way of *anticipation*, is plain in the words, “*Although the people which came out of Egypt entered not into the promised rest of God, by reason of unbelief and disobedience, as you have proved; yet the next generation, under the conduct of Joshua, entered and enjoyed it; therefore, what ground have you to*

propose another rest to us?" This is the force of the objection; and the reason of his denial is, that five hundred years after, God, by David, proposeth another rest, or, another *day of rest*, and invites the people to an entrance, after they were so long fully possessed of all that Joshua conducted them into. And whereas there was no new rest for the people to enter into in the days of David, and the psalm, wherein these words are recorded, is acknowledged to be prophetical of the days of the Messiah, it unavoidably follows, that there is yet *a rest*, and a *day of rest* remaining for the people of God, as ver. 9.

§3. This interpretation of the words perfectly satisfieth the *argument* in hand; but I yet judge there is *more* in them than a mere answer to the objections mentioned, though expositors look no farther, viz. That the apostle also designs to teach the Hebrews that all these things, which were spoken about the rest of God in the land of Canaan and Mosaical institutions, *had not the reality* or substance of the things themselves in them, Heb. x, 1; so that absolutely neither did God rest, nor were the people to look for rest in them: they had no other end or use, but to teach them to look out after, and to prepare for *that rest* which was promised of old; so that Joshua did not give them *real rest*, but only that which was a typical instruction for a season. And therefore *in David* the same matter is still carried on, and direction is still given to look out after the *future rest*.

§4. (II.) *Obs. 1.* There is no *true rest* for the souls of men, but only in Jesus Christ by the gospel. Notwithstanding all that was done for the Israelites by Joshua, yet he gave them not *rest*, he brought them not into the full and *complete rest of God*; "having provided some better things for us, that they without

us should not be made perfect:" and the grand reason hereof is, because *God himself resteth not in any thing else*; and in his *rest* alone it is that we can find any; yes, utterly vain is it for *us* to seek rest in that wherein *God* resteth not. Trouble and *disquietude* entered into the whole creation by the sin and apostasy of Adam; God no more rested in the works of his hands, but cursed the earth, Gen. iii, 17—19, made the whole creation subject to vanity, Rom. viii, 20, and revealed his wrath from heaven against the ungodliness of men, Rom. i, 18. And hereof he hath in all ages since given signal instances; as in the deluge, wherewith he drowned the old world; the fire from heaven wherewith he burned Sodom and Gomorrah, &c. Man hath also utterly *lost his rest* in that first rest of God; and though he several ways seek after it, yet, like the unclean spirit cast out of his habitation, he can find none. Some seek it in the *world* with its pleasures and profits; some in the gratification of their sensual lusts; some in their own goodness and *self-righteousness*; some in *superstition*, and vain ways of religious worship invented by themselves; but all in vain. Man hath lost his rest by falling from God, and nothing will afford him the least quietness, but what brings him to HIM again, which none of these ways will do. It is in CHRIST ALONE our *lost rest* may be recovered, for in him alone, as declared in the gospel, doth God rest, who is our exemplar.

§5. It is surely, therefore, our wisdom in our inquiry after rest, (which, whether we take notice of it or not, is the main design of our lives) that, in all we project or execute, we do not take up with any thing *beneath* HIM, or *without* HIM. The enjoyments of the world, the righteousness of the law, the outward ordinances of divine worship, say openly and plainly, that

*rest is not in them.* If all those in conjunction had been satisfactory to that end; then had *Joshua* given the people rest, and there had been no mention of *another day*. Yea, whatever rest they may afford, lawfully used, it is none in comparison of that which is to be obtained in Christ Jesus; hence he himself invites us to him under this very notion, of giving "rest to our souls," Matt. xi, 28; and in him there is no want, no defect, no fadingness, no disappointment. He that rests in the world, in himself, in his own righteousness, or even in God's ordinances, will never come to *true rest* until he be deprived of all expectation from, and confidence in them.

§6. *Obs. 2.* The gospel church state is a state of spiritual rest in Christ. How many pretend to an interest in this church state, who plainly and openly seek after their rest in other things; many in their own duties, but most in their lusts, and the pleasures of the world. Where is the privilege of such persons as these, above that of the Israelites under *Joshua*? Can they say that the Lord Christ hath given them rest for their souls in the gospel? Alas! they have no rest at all; in what they pursue, the gospel hath no concernment, Did Christ come, think you, to give you rest in your lusts, in your sins, in your, lawless and carnal pleasure? God forbid; he came to give you rest from these things, in HIMSELF.

§7. *Obs. 3.* It is a great mercy and privilege to have a day of rest and worship given us. The apostle doth not say, that after these things he speaks of *another rest*, but of *another day*; for from the foundation of the world we were taught our rest in God by *a day of rest given us*. When by sin we forfeited our interest in that rest itself, God might have justly deprived all the world of the knowlege of that day of

rest first appointed; but now the rest of God being again established, he hath appointed for us another day, as in the text. And this is a great mercy and privilege; for it is a pledge of *our rest in God*; which is the life, happiness, and blessedness of our souls. Again; it is a *pledge of the recovery of his rest* for us; and that it is not absolutely the same rest in God whereunto we were made, but another, a better and more sure; therefore *another day* is given us; and not the same as that of old: but another day could not be established but with respect to the *works of Christ* already wrought, and as a pledge of them. Moreover, it is given as a *means of entering into the rest of God*; for on this day hath God ordained that the solemn declaration of his mind and will concerning his rest; and our entrance into it, should be more especially made to us. On this we do therefore celebrate that solemn worship of God; whereby we express our faith concerning our rest and acquiescence in him, and by which, as means appointed for that end, we are admitted into that blissful repose, and carried on gradually towards its full and eternal enjoyment.

VERSES 9, 10.

*There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.*

§1. The term rest includes the Christian sabbath. §2. The analogy between the several rests of God and his people. §3. That the evangelical sabbath is intended is farther proved. §4. Who intended by the people of God. §5—7. The true foundation of the Christian sabbath. §8. Corollaries. §9. Observation. That believers under the New Testament have lost no privilege that was enjoyed under the old. §10. Additional observations.

§1. **H**AVING passed through his *testimonies* and *arguments*, the apostle, in these verses, lays down both what he hath evinced in his whole disputation,

as also the general foundation of it, in answer to the principles of his preceding discourse. (*Ἀπολείπεται relinquitur, superest*) *it is left, it remains*, it is evinced; for this word may refer to (*ἄρα*) *therefore*, and be a part of the conclusion following; and so the verb is to be taken impersonally, *it remaineth therefore*, or this is that which we have proved. In this sense the verb (*ἀπολείπεται*) is the modification of the conclusion, and is not of the substance of it, or one of the terms of the proposition. Or, the word may refer to the following (*σαββαλισμος*) and be of a neutral signification; a sabbatism, or rest *remaineth*; there is yet another rest remaining and abiding for the people of God to enter into, besides those before mentioned. *It remaineth*, that is, God hath prepared it, promised it, and invites us to enter into it. (*Σαββαλισμος*) *a sabbatism*; this word is framed by our apostle from an Hebrew original, by the addition of a Greek termination; and so becomes comprehensive of the whole sense to be expressed, which no other single word in either would do. The original word (*שבת*) signifies, *to rest*; and is first used to express the rest of God after his works of creation; Gen. ii, 2, “and he *rested* (or sabbatised) on the seventh day.” Hence the word is used by our apostle to shew, that the rest which he now asserts for the people of God, is founded in the rest of God himself. If this had not been intended, it might indeed have been (*ἀναπαυσις*) *a rest in general*, it could not have been (*σαββατισμος*) *a sabbatism*, a sabbatising rest; for there is no foundation for any such name but in the rest of God. Hence this word came to express the *day* of rest appointed for man, Exod. xx, 10—12; because God (*שבת shabbath*) *rested* from his works, he blessed *the day of rest*, the *sabbath* which he would have us remember to keep. Now our apostle having

proved, that the consideration of that *original rest* of God, as to its first ends and purposes, is removed, and consequently the *day itself founded thereon*, and another rest introduced, to be expressed by another day, he calls it *a sabbatism*, which is calculated to express both the rest itself, and the observation of another day likewise, as a pledge and token of it, and of our spiritual interest therein. The word then doth not *precisely* intend either a *day* of rest, or a *spiritual* rest; but the *whole of our rest in God* with respect to *his*—also comprising that day which is the token thereof.

§2. And hereby the apostle completes the due analogy that is between the several rests of God and his people. For, as at the *beginning of the world* there was first the *work* of God, and his *rest* thereon, which made way for a *rest* for his people in himself, and in his worship, by the contemplation of his works which he had made, and on the finishing of which he rested; and a *day* determined, blessed, and sanctified, to express that rest of God, which was the sabbatism of the people of God from the foundation of the world;—and as at the *giving of the law* there was a great *work* of God, and his *rest* in finishing his work, and the establishment of his worship in the land of Canaan, which made way for the people's entering into his rest, and had a *day* assigned them to express the one and the other, and to help them to enter finally into the rest of God; all which were types and shadows of the rest mentioned by David, and which was their sabbatising rest: so now under the gospel, there is a *sabbatism* comprehensive of all these. For there was, as we shall see, a great *work* of God; and an ensuing *rest* of his own, on which is founded the



promise of rest spiritual and eternal to believers; and the determination of a new *day*, expressive of the rest of God, and our rest in him; which is the *sabbatism* that our apostle here affirms to *remain* for the people of God, which is the FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK.

§3. Now besides the evidence that ariseth from the whole *context* there are two considerations which make it undeniably manifest, that the apostle here proves—the granting of an *evangelical sabbath*, or a *day of rest* for the worship of God to be constantly observed; though he doth not this *only*, nor separately; which, whilst some have aimed to prove, they have failed in their aim; not being able to maintain a sabbatical rest exclusively, in *opposition* either to a spiritual or eternal rest, for it is not here considered in that view.

Now these considerations are,

1. The introduction of the *seventh day's rest* into this discourse, and the mentioning of our gospel rest by the name of a *day*. Unless the apostle had designed the declaration of a *day of rest* now under the gospel, as well as a real spiritual rest by believing, there is no tolerable reason to be given for his mentioning the *works* of God, his *rest*, and his appointment of the *old sabbath*; which, without respect to *another day*, doth greatly obscure and involve his discourse.

2. His use of this word (*σαββατισμος*) *sabbatism*, coined as it were for this purpose, that it might comprise the *spiritual rest*, and also express *sabbath keeping*. When he speaks of our rest *in general*, he still uses another word, (*καταπαυσις*) adding, that there was a special day for its enjoyment. Here he introduceth (*σαββατισμος*) *sabbatism*; which his way of arguing would not have allowed, had he not designed to express the *Christian sabbath*.

§4. "To the people of God." Those of old to whom the rest of Canaan was proposed, were (ὁ λαὸς τῆς Θεοῦ) *the people of God*; and God hath a people still to whom rest is promised; and whom he hath before described thus, ver. 3, "*We who have believed do enter into rest.*" Here he describes them by their *relation* to God, and the *privilege* that depended thereon; they are "*the people of God,*" that are interested in this sabbatism. And the apostle makes use of this description of them upon a double account:

1. Because their being the *people of God*, (that is, in covenant with him, for where a people is God's people, he is *their God*, Hos. ii, 23,) was the greatest and most comprehensive privilege that the Hebrews had to boast of; this was their glory, and that which exalted them above all nations in the world, so their church pleads: Isa. lxiii, 19, "We are thine, thou never barest rule over them, thy name was not called on them." That is, they were never called "the people of Jehovah," because never taken into covenant with him. This privilege, the apostle lets them know, belongs as well to them that believe under the New Testament, as it did to them under the Old. Abram was become now Abraham, "a father of many nations." And as those who were his carnal seed of old were "the people of God;" so God had now *a people*, his children "according to the *faith.*" They shall see therefore that they shall lose nothing, no privilege, by coming over to the *gospel state* by faith in Christ Jesus. Upon a new account they become "the people of God," which interests them and their children in the covenant, with the *seals* and all the ordinances of it, even as formerly. For this name, PEOPLE, doth not primarily respect *individuals*, but *a collective body* of men, with all their relations. BELIEVERS, not *singly*

considered, but *they and their seed*, or their children, are this "people;" and where *they* are excluded from the *initial ordinance* of the covenant, I know not how believers can be called the "people of God."

2. He proceeds farther, and shews them that this privilege is now *transferred* from the old state, and *Canaan rest*, to them that enter into this rest of God under the gospel. Hence, instead of *losing* the privilege of being the "people of God," by faith in Christ, he lets them know that they could no longer *retain* the one without the other. If they failed in the latter, they would be no longer the "people of God;" and indeed ever since they ceased to be *God's people*, they have been *no people*, or enjoyed no political rule in the world.

Thus, then, there "remaineth a rest," or *sabbath keeping* for this people of God. But yet it may be said, that this sabbatism wanteth a due foundation, in an especial *work*, and *rest* of God. For as, if God had not done a *new work*, and *rested* in it, at the giving of the law, and the establishment of his worship, whereby a new world, as it were, was erected, there could have been no new rest for his people to enter into, but all must have regarded that which was from the foundation of the world; so if there be not a *new work and rest of God*, now wrought and entered into by him, there cannot be a *new rest*, and a *new day* of rest for the people of God. This objection, therefore, the apostle removes in the following verse, and manifests that there is *a new blessed foundation* for the rest he now proposeth.

§5. "For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his works, as God from his own," so are the words to be read. Expositors generally apply these words to *believers*, and their entering into

the rest of God; but I am not satisfied with that exposition, and (with becoming deference to the wise, learned, and godly) look upon it as that which neither suits the design of the apostle, nor can bear a tolerable sense in its particular application. For, *first*, supposing believers to be here intended, what are the works they are said to rest from? Their sins, say some; their labors, sorrows, and sufferings, say others; from these they *rest in heaven*. But how can they be said to rest from these works, as God rested from his own? For God so rested from his, as to take the greatest delight and satisfaction in them, and to be as it were refreshed by them. "In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day *he rested*, and was *refreshed*," Exod. xxxi, 17. He so rested *from them*, as that he rested *in them*, and *blessed* them; and sanctified the time wherein they were finished;—*Again*, when are men supposed to rest from these works? It cannot be in *this* world; for here we rest not at all from temptations, sufferings, and sorrows; and in the mortification of sin we are to fight continually, resisting even unto blood. It must be, therefore, in *heaven* that they so rest; but (however affirmed by some) this supposition utterly excludes the rest of the gospel from the apostle's discourse, and so enervates it, that his whole present argument is nothing to his purpose, and therefore is inadmissible.

§6. It appears, therefore, that it is *the rest of another* that is here intended; even that of *Christ* from *his works*, which is compared to the rest of *God* from *his* at the foundation of the world. For (1.) The conjunction (*γὰρ*) *for*, which introduceth the assertion, manifests that the apostle in these words, gives an account whence it is that there is a new *sabbatism* remaining for the people of God. He had proved be-

fore, that there could be *no such rest*, but what was founded in the *works* of God and *his rest* that ensued thereon. Such a foundation, therefore, he saith, this *new rest* hath, which must be in the *works* and rest of *Christ*, by whom the church was built. For as that rest, which all the world was to observe, was *founded in his works and rest* who built and made the world; so the rest of the gospel church is to be *founded in his works and rest*, by whom the church was built, Jesus Christ. For he on account of his works and rest is also “the Lord of the sabbath,” to abrogate one day, and to institute another. (2.) The apostle here changeth the manner of his assertion, from the plural absolutely, “We who believe;” of which there can be no reason given, but only to signify the introduction of a *singular person*. (3.) The rest which he is said to enter into, is called *his rest*, absolutely. (4.) There is a direct parallel in the whole verse, between the works of the old creation and those of the *new*; which the apostle is evidently comparing together. Now *God rested* from his *own works* of creation, by ceasing to create, only continuing all things by his power in their order, and propagating them to his glory, by his respect to them, or refreshment in them, as setting forth his praise, and satisfying his glorious design—and so also must *He rest*, who is here spoken of; he must *cease from working* in the like kind; he must suffer no more, die no more, but only continue the work of his grace, in the perservation of the new creature, and the orderly increase and propagation of it by the Spirit; in the delight and satisfaction he taketh in his works. Jesus Christ sees of the travail of his soul and is satisfied, being in possession of that glory which was set before him.

§7. This his entrance into rest was at his *resurrection* from the dead; for then was he freed from the sentence and stroke of the law, and discharged all the debt of our sin, which he had undertaken to make satisfaction for; Acts ii; 24, then were all types and predictions fulfilled that concerned the work of our redemption; then particularly that work was done, which answereth to God's creating work: then was Satan absolutely subdued, peace with God restored, and the whole foundation of the church gloriously laid; the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy; then and therein was he declared to be the Son of God with power, Rom. i, 4, God manifesting to all, that this was *He* to whom he said, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee," Acts xiii, 33. Therefore the Lord Christ entered into his rest, after he had finished and *ceased from his works* on the morning of the FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK, when he arose from the dead, the foundation of the *new creation* being laid and perfected. There lieth the foundation of the "sabbatism that remains for the people of God." The apostle hath before asserted it, and there remained no more for him to do, but to manifest, that as those other rests which were passed the one at the beginning of the world, the other at the giving of the law, had their foundation in the *works and rests of God*, whence *a day* of rest was given to the church; so had this *new rest* a foundation in the *works and rests of Christ*; who built all these things, and is God; determining *a day* for our use, by that whereon himself entered into his rest, the FIRST *day of the week*.

§8. Hence we may observe, as irrefragable *corollaries*.

1. The whole church, all the duties, worship, and privileges of it are founded in the person, authority, and actions of Jesus Christ.

2. The first day of the week, the day of the resurrection of Christ, when he rested from his works, is appointed and determined for a day of rest or sabbath to the church, to be constantly observed in the room of the *seventh* day, appointed and observed from the foundation of the world under the Old Testament. From the whole, and particularly the *ninth* verse, another observation offers.

§9. *Obs.* Believers under the New Testament have lost nothing, no privilege that was enjoyed by them under the Old. Many things have they *gained*, and those of unspeakable excellency, but they have lost nothing at all. Whatever they had of privilege in any ordinance, *that* is continued; and whatever was of burden or bondage, that is taken away. All that they had of old was on this account, that they were "the people of God;" to them, as such, did all their advantages and privileges belong; but they were so the people of God, as to be kept like servants under the severe discipline of the law, Gal. iv, 1. Into this great fountain privilege believers under the gospel have now succeeded; and what was of servitude in reference to the law is removed; but whatever is of advantage is continued to them, "as the people of God." This I suppose is unquestionable,—that God, making them to be *his people* who were not his people, would never cut them short of any privilege, which belonged before to his people *as such*, Rom. ix, 25, 26. Besides, the state of the gospel is a state of more grace and favor from God, than that under the law; John i, 18; the whole gospel is an enlargement of divine favor to God's people; and so it is a better state than that which

went before; is accompanied with better promises, and more liberty. Nothing then of this nature can be lost to gospel believers, but all privileges at any time granted to the people of God, are made over to them. Let men but give but one instance to this purpose, and not beg the matter in question, it shall suffice. Moreover, God hath so ordered all things in the dispensation of his grace, and the institution of his worship, as that Jesus Christ should have the pre-eminence in all; and is it possible that any man should be a loser by the coming of Christ, or by his own coming to Christ? It is against the *whole gospel* once to imagine it in the least instance. Let it now be inquired, whether it was not a great privilege of the people of God of old, that their *infant seed* were taken into covenant with them, and were made partakers of the initial seal thereof? Doubtless, it was the greatest they enjoyed, next to the grace they received for the saving of their own souls. That it was so granted them, and so esteemed by them, might be easily proved. And without this, whatever they were, they were not A PEOPLE. Believers under the gospel are, as we have before noticed, "the people of God;" and that with all sorts of advantages annexed to that condition, above what were enjoyed by them who of old were so; how is it then that this people of God, made so by Jesus Christ in the gospel, should have their charter upon its renewal, RAZED, with a deprivation of one of their choicest rights and privileges? Assuredly it is not so; and therefore, if believers are now, as the apostle says they are, "the people of God," their children have a *right* to the *initial seal* of the covenant.—To the foregoing we may add some farther observations.

§10. 1. It is "the people of God" alone who have a right to all the privileges of the gospel; and who in



a due manner can perform all the duties of it. Let any become the "people of God," by entering into covenant with him in Jesus Christ, and all other mercies will be added to them.

2. The people of God, as such, have work to do, and labor incumbent on them. Rest and labor are correlates, the one supposeth the other; affirming, therefore, that there is a *rest* for them, includes in like manner, that they have a *work* to do. None that know, in any measure, what is their condition in themselves, what their station in the world, what enemies they have to conflict with, what duties are continually incumbent on them, but know there is work and labor required of them. Thus our Savior expresseth his approbation of his churches by, "I know thy work and thy labor," Rev. ii, 3.

3. God hath graciously given his people an *entrance* into rest, during their state of work and labor, to sweeten it to them, and to enable them for it. The state of sin is a state of *all labor*, and no rest, for "there is no peace, or rest, to the wicked," saith God, Isa. lviii, the future state of glory is *all rest*; the present state of believing and obedience is a *mixed* state, partly of labor, partly of rest; of *labor* in ourselves, in the world, against sin, under affliction and persecution; of *rest* in Christ, in his love, in his worship and grace. And these things have a great mutual respect to one another; our labor makes our rest sweet; and our rest makes our labor easy. So is God pleased to fill us, and exercise us; all to prepare us duly for *eternal rest* and glory with himself.

## VERSE 11.

*Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.*

§1. (I.) The connexion of the words. The apostle's reason for changing the expression. §2, 3. The passage farther explained. §4. (II.) Observations, 1. That great opposition will rise against men in entering into God's rest. §5. 2. It very well deserves our endeavors. §6. Additional observations.

§1. **I**N this verse we have a return to, and an improvement made of, the principal exhortation which the apostle had before proposed. In the first verse he laid it down in those words, "Let us fear, lest a promise being left of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it;" here he declares, how that fear is to be improved and exercised: to *believe*, is to *enter into the rest of God*. Again, for the farther explication of these words, we may observe, that the apostle changeth his expression from what it was in the preceding verse; there he tells us that there remaineth (*σαββατισμος*) a *sabbatism* for the people of God, but here changes it into (*καταπαυσις*) *rest*, in general, and the reason is, because by the former he intended to express the rest of the gospel—not absolutely, but—with respect to the pledge of it, in the *day of rest*. But the apostle here returns to *exhort* the Hebrews to endeavor after an interest in, and a participation of, the *whole rest* of God in the gospel, with all the privileges and advantages contained in it, and therefore resumes the word whereby he had before expressed the rest of God in general.

§2. "Let us labor, therefore, to enter into that rest." (*Σπρδαζωμεν.*) Let us diligently study, or *endeavor*; I had rather use "endeavor," than "labor;" for such a laboring is to be understood, as wherein the mind, the whole soul, is very intently exercised, on account of

the difficulties that await us. The apostle expressing our faith and gospel obedience, with the end of them, by “*entering into the rest of God,*” a phrase of speech taken from the people’s entering into the land of Canaan of old, he reminds us of the great opposition we shall be sure to meet with. It is well known what difficulties and storms the people met with in their peregrinations through the wilderness. So great were they, that the discouragements which arose from them, were the principal occasions of their acting that unbelief which proved their ruin. Sometimes their want of water and food, sometimes the weariness and tediousness of the way, sometimes the reports they had of giants and walled towns, stirred up their unbelief to murmurings, and hastened their destruction. And that *we* shall meet with the like oppositions in our faith and profession, the apostle instructs us by his using this phrase of speech—“*entering into the rest of God.*”

§3. The word ( $\pi\iota\pi\omega$ ) to *fall*, is ambiguous; for men may fall into *sin*, and they may fall into the *punishment* due to their sin. Now if ( $\upsilon\pi\omicron\delta\epsilon\iota\gamma\mu\alpha$ ) *example*, in this place, be taken merely for a *document*, or instruction, which is undoubtedly the most proper and usual signification of the original, then the sense may be, Lest any of you should fall into that unbelief of which, and its pernicious consequences, you have an *instructive* example in them that went before, proposed on purpose, that you might be stirred up to avoid it. But if the word be taken for another kindred term ( $\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\delta\epsilon\iota\gamma\mu\alpha$ ) as sometimes it is, and so including the signification of an “*exemplary punishment,*” then the meaning of the words is, Lest any of you through your unbelief fall into “*that punishment, which hath been made exemplary,*” in the ruin of those unbelievers

who went before you. And this I take to be the meaning of the words: "You have the gospel, and the rest of Christ therein, preached and proposed to you; some of you have already taken upon you the profession of it, as the people did of old at mount Sinai, when they said, all that the Lord our God shall command, that will we do. Your condition is now like theirs, and was represented therein; consider, therefore, how things fell out with them, and what was the event of their sin, and God's dealing with them. They believed not, they made not good their engagements; they persisted not in their profession, but were disobedient and stubborn, and God destroyed them. They fell and perished in the wilderness. If now you, or any amongst you, shall be found guilty of the like sin, do not think that you shall avoid the like punishment. An awful example of God's severity is set before you in their destruction; and if you would not fall into it, or under it, labor by faith and obedience to enter into the rest of Christ."

§4. (II.) *Obs.* 1. That great *oppositions* will rise against men in the work of entering into God's rest; that is, as to gospel faith and obedience. The very *first lessons* of the gospel discourage many from looking any farther; so when our Savior entertained the young man that came to him for instruction, with the lesson of *self-denial*, he had no mind to hear any more, but went away sorrowful, Matt. xix, 22. And the reasons hereof may be taken partly from the nature of the *gospel itself*, and partly from our *own natures*. In the gospel there is proposed a *new way* of "entering into the rest of God," of acceptance with him, of righteousness and salvation, which is contrary to our natural principle of self-righteousness. This fills our hearts naturally with enmity and contempt, making us esteem

it foolish and weak, no way able to effect what it promiseth. And if the work of the gospel go on, if men *endeavor* by it to enter into God's rest, Satan must lose his subjects, and the world its friends, and sin its life; and there is not one instance wherein they will not try their utmost to retain their interest, which renders our "endeavor to enter," a great and difficult work. He that shall tell men that it is plain, easy, suited to *nature*, as weak or *corrupt*, will but delude and deceive them. To mortify sin, to keep our bodies in subjection, to deny ourselves, pulling out our right eyes, cutting off right hands, taking up the cross in all sorts of afflictions and persecutions—these, all these, are required of us in this matter; and surely they are not at present joyous, but grievous; not easy and pleasant, but difficult, and attended with many hardships. To lull men asleep with hopes of a rest in Christ, and also in their lusts, in the world, in their earthly accommodations, is to deceive and ruin them. We must not represent the duties of gospel faith and obedience, as the Jesuits preached Christ to the *Indians*, never letting them know that he was *crucified*—lest they should be offended at it! But we must tell men the *plain truth* as it is, and let them know what they are to expect from within and from without, if they intend to "enter into rest."

§5. *Obs. 2.* That as the utmost of our labors and endeavors are required to our obtaining an entrance into the rest of Christ, so it very well *deserves* them. "Let us," saith the apostle, "*endeavor* this matter with all diligence," as the word imports. Men are content to lay out themselves to the utmost for *other* things, and to spend their strength for "the bread that perisheth;" yea, for "that which is not bread." Every one may see how busy and industrious the world is in

pursuit of perishing things; and men are so foolish as to think that they *deserve* their whole time and strength; and more they would expend in the same way, if they were intrusted with it. "This their way is their *folly*." A few other observations must not be omitted.

§6. 1. Preceding judgments on others are monitory ordinances to us. This is the use we are to make of God's judgments, without a censorious reflection on them in particular who fall under them, as our Savior teacheth us.

2. It is better to *have* an example, than to be *made* an example of Divine displeasure; yet this will befall us if we neglect the former; for,

3. We ought to have no expectation of escaping that vengeance which others, being guilty in like manner, have not escaped. We are apt to flatter ourselves, that however it fared with others, it will go well with us; like him who blesseth himself, and says, he shall have peace when he hears the words of the curse. This self-pleasing and security variously insinuates itself into our minds, and tenaciously cleaves to us; but as we have any care of our eternal welfare, we are to look upon it as our greatest enemy. There is no more certain rule for us to judge of our own condition, than the examples of God's dealing with others in a similar condition; they are all effects of eternal and invariable righteousness; and with God there is no respect of persons.

## VERSES 12, 13.

*For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked, and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.*

§1. Introduction. §2—10. (I.) The phrase—the word of God—refers to the person of Christ. The various parts of the words explained. §11, 12. (II.) Observations. §13. The power of Christ in his word is irresistible, as to its designed effects. §14—19. Other important Observations.

§1. **T**HESSE verses contain a new enforcement of the preceding exhortation. Two things are apt to rise in the minds of men for their relief against the fear of such comminations; either that their failing in point of duty may not be taken notice of; or that threatenings are proposed (*in terrorem*) for terror only; not with a mind of putting them into execution. But these vain pretences and deceiving reliefs, our apostle in these verses obviates; letting them know that they are to be tried by *Him*, who both actually discovers all the secret frames of our hearts, and will deal with all men accordingly. Moreover, herein he informs them how it behoves them to attend to his exhortation, not by a mere outward profession, but with an holy jealousy and watchfulness over their hearts, and all their intimate recesses, seeing all these things are open to his cognizance, and subject to his trial.

§2. The whole exposition of these words depends on the subject spoken of, verse 12, (*ο λογος τς Θεσ*) *the word of God*. To elucidate this matter, I would remark;

1. I grant, that this name is ascribed sometimes to the *essential* word of God, and sometimes to his enunciative word, or the holy scripture.

2. It is granted, that the attributes and effects here ascribed to “the word of God,” may in several senses be applied to the one or the other.

3. It must be acknowledged, that if the things here mentioned be ascribed to the written word, yet they do not primarily and absolutely belong to it upon its own account, but by virtue of its relation to Jesus Christ, whose word it is, and by reason of the power and efficacy that is by him communicated to it. And on the other hand, if it be the Son, or the eternal Word of God that is here intended, it will be granted, that the things here ascribed to him are such as, for the most part, he effects by his word upon the hearts and consciences of men. Hence the difference between the various interpretations in the *issue* concurs, though the subject *primarily* spoken of be variously apprehended.

§3. On the whole, I judge,—that the eternal Word of God, or the *person of Christ*, is the subject here spoken of, for the ensuing reasons:

1. ( $\Lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  and  $\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma \tau\omicron\varsigma \Theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$ ) the *Word*, and the *Word of God*, is the proper name of Christ in respect to his *Divine* nature; as the eternal Son of God, expressly, John i, 1, 2, Rev. xix, 13.

2. His name is thus called, or, this is his *name*, “the Word of God;” therefore this being the name of Christ, and all things spoken of agreeing to him, and there being no cogent reasons in the context to the contrary, he is presumed to be spoken of; nor will any rule of interpretation give countenance to another sense.

3. Our apostle accommodates himself to the apprehensions and expressions in use among the Hebrews, so far as agreeable to the truth, rectifying them under mistakes, and arguing with them from their own



concessions and persuasions. Now at this time there was nothing more usual among the Hebrews, than to denote the second subsistence in the Deity, by the name of the "Word of God." They were now divided into two great parts; the inhabitants of Canaan with the regions adjoining, and many old remnants (so to speak) in the East, who used the Syro-Chaldean language, being but a dialect of the Hebrew; and—the dispersions under the Greek empire, who are commonly called Hellenists, who used the Greek tongue; and both these at that time, usually in their several languages described the second person in the Trinity by the name of "the Word of God." We have an eminent proof of the former in the translation of the scripture, which, at least some part of it, was made about this time amongst them, commonly called the *Chaldee paraphrase*: in the whole of it the second person is mentioned under the name of (ממרא דיו) *Memra daiova*,) "the Word of God;" to whom all personal properties, and all divine works, are in that translation assigned—an illustrious testimony of the faith of the old church concerning the distinct subsistence of a plurality of persons in the divine nature! And the Hellenists, who wrote in the Greek tongue, used the name of (ο λογος τος Θεος) "the word of God," to the same purpose; as I have elsewhere manifested out of the writings of Philo. And this one consideration is to me absolutely satisfactory as to the intention of the apostle in using this expression; especially seeing that all the things mentioned, may far more properly and regularly be ascribed to the *person* of the Son, than to the word as written or preached. And whosoever will take the pains to consider what occurs in the *Targums* concerning (ממרא דיו) "the word of

God," and compare it with what the apostle here speaks, and the manner of its introduction, will, if I do not greatly mistake, be of the same mind with myself.

4. The *attributes* here ascribed to the word, ver. 12, do all of them properly belong to the person of Christ; and cannot primarily and *directly* be ascribed to the gospel. This shall be manifested in the ensuing explanation of the words.

§4. It is said to be (*ζωv, vivus, vivens,*) *living*, which we have translated ambiguously, "quick." The word (*ζωv*) is applied to God himself, as expressing a property of his nature; Matt. xvi, 16, 1 Tim. iv, 10, Heb. iii, 12; and it is also peculiarly ascribed to Christ the Mediator, Rev. i, 18, "the living one." And two things are intended in it.—That he who is so hath *life in himself*, and—That he is the *Lord of life* to others. Both which are emphatically spoken of the Son; he hath "life in himself," John v, 26, and he is the "prince of life," Acts iii, 15, or the *author* of it. He hath the disposal of the life of all, whereon all our concerns, temporal and eternal, depend. See John i, 4. And it is evident how suitable to the purpose of our apostle, the mention hereof at this time was. He minds the Hebrews, that "he with whom they have to do," in this matter, is the *living one*; as in like manner he had before exhorted them to take heed of departing from the "living God;" and afterwards warns them how fearful a thing it is to fall into the hands of the "living God," chap. x, 31. So here, to dissuade them from the one, and to awe them from the other, he minds them that the "Word of God," with whom in an especial manner they had to do, is "living." Now this cannot *properly* be ascribed to the word of the

gospel; it is indeed the instrumental means of quickening the souls of men with spiritual life; but in itself it is not absolutely "living;" it hath not life in itself, as Christ has. "In him is life, and the life is the light of men," John i, 4, and this one property of—"him with whom we have to do"—contains the two great motives to obedience; namely, that he is able to support and reward the obedient, and to avenge the disobedient; the one will not be unrewarded, nor the other unrevenged, for he is the "living one" with whom in these things we have to do.

§5. (ΕΠΕΡΓΗΣ) *powerful*. Power for operation is an act of life; and such as is the *life* of any thing, such is its *power* and operation; life, power, and operation answer one another; and this word signifies *actual power*, power exerted, or power that is effectual in actual operation. Having therefore first assigned "life," to the word of God, that is, the *principle* of all power, our apostle adds, that he *exerts* that principle in actual operation, according to his sovereign pleasure.

The word (ΕΠΕΡΓΕΩ) is, I confess, a common word, signifying the efficacy of any thing in operation according to its principle and power; but it is that also whereby our apostle most frequently expresseth the almighty, effectual, operating power of God in spiritual things. And this was necessary to be added to the property of "life," to manifest, that Christ would effectually put forth his power in dealing with professors according to their deportment, and that the power of Christ lies not idle, is not useless, but is continually exercising itself towards us, as the matter requires. There is also, I acknowledge, an energy, an operative power in the word of God as written, or preached; but it is in it only as a consequent of its being *his* word, who is "the living one."

§6. The original of the power of Christ in *life*, and its efficacy in *operation*, being laid down, he farther declares it by its properties and effects:

*First*, this power is described by its *properties*. It is endued with a *cutting* power, in the comparative degree; (τομώτερος) *sharper*, more piercing, (υπερ πασαν) *than any*. The preposition added to the comparative degree increaseth the signification; the construction expressing the greatest distance between the things compared—"Than any *two-edged sword*," (μαχαιραν διστομον, that is, αμφιστομον, *gladius biceps, anceps, utrinque incidens*;) *double edged*, or mouthed, cutting every way. (פי הרב) "the mouth of the sword," is an *hebraism*, but the allusion is so elegant, that most languages have admitted it. The metaphor is doubtless taken from wild beasts, whom mankind first feared, that devoured with their mouths, which, when the sword began to be used for *destruction*, gave them occasion to call its edge by the name of its "mouth:" (διστομος) *double mouthed*, cutting each way, that leaves nothing unpierced whereunto it is applied. Christ, in the exercise of his power, is "more piercing than any two-edged sword." God oftentimes sets forth *himself* and his power, with allusion to things sensible, the better to convey some notion of them to our dull and contracted understandings: so he is said to be a "consuming fire," and that he will be "as a lion;" things of great terror. This of a "sword," is often mentioned with respect to *Christ*, Isa. xlix, 2, Rev. i, 16, "Out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword;" principally with respect to the exercise of his power by his word, which is called the "sword of the Spirit," Eph. vi, 17, the sword on his thigh, Psalm xlv, 5, 6, when he goeth forth to subdue the souls of men to himself; which is also the "rod of his power," Psalm cx, 2.

But it is Christ *himself*, as the principal efficiency, who makes the word powerful and sharp. And whereas there is a two-fold use of a sword; the one *natural*, to cut or pierce through all opposition, and as an armor of defence; the other *moral*, to execute punishments, whence the sword is taken for the *authority* of punishing, and for punishment itself: Rom. xiii, 4: so the Lord Christ by his word and Spirit pierces into the souls of men, (as in the next clause,) notwithstanding all the defence of pride, security, obstinacy, and unbelief, which they wrap themselves in, and executes judgments on wicked men, false professors, and apostates. "He smites the earth with the rod of his mouth, and slays the wicked with the breath of his lips," Isa. xi, 4; he cuts off the life of their carnal hopes, false peace, and worldly security, by the two-edged sword that proceeds out of his mouth.

§7. *Secondly*, this power of the word is described by its effects (*διεικνυμενος, perveniens, penetrans*) *piercing*, is here elegantly used in pursuit of the former allusion, to express the power of Christ as a sword, "piercing" into the inmost recesses, and, as it were, the secret chambers of the mind and heart.—The *object* of this "piercing" is the soul and spirit. Some think that by (*ψυχη*) *soul*, the natural and unregenerate part is intended; and by (*πνευμα*) *spirit*, that which is in it renewed and regenerate; but whereas our apostle makes a distinction between soul and spirit, as he doth in other places, he most probably intends by (*ψυχη*) *the soul*, the affections, appetite, and desires; and by (*πνευμα*) *the spirit*, the mind or understanding, the (*το ηγεμονικον*) *conducting* part of the soul. For setting out the penetrating power of the word of God, with reference to the souls of men, he distributes the "soul" into, as it were, its principal constituent parts

or faculties; that is the *mind*, that conducts and guides it; and the *passions* that steer and balance it; wherein all the most secret recesses, and springs of all its actings lie. And this sense is confirmed from the following words wherein the same thing is asserted under a different notion. "The joints and marrow." That then which in all these expressions is intended, is the absolute power and ability of the Son of God, to judge of the rectitude and crookedness of the ways and walkings of the sons of men under their profession, from the inward frames of their minds and hearts to all their outward duties and performances, either in perseverance or backsliding.

§8. The last expression, "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart," is plainly declarative of what is elsewhere ascribed to him; namely, that he is (*καρδιογνωστής*) "*He that knoweth and searcheth the hearts of men.*" This is a peculiar property of God, and is affirmed to be so; Jer. xvii, 10; 1 Sam. xvi, 7; Psal. vii, 9; and in an especial manner is ascribed to the Lord Christ, John ii, 24, 25; and xxi, 17; Rev. ii, 23. This is eminently expressed in that confession of Peter, "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee;" by virtue of thy omniscience whereby thou knowest all things, thou knowest my heart and the love therein which I have to thee. "And is a *discerner*," (*κρίτικος, judex, discretor,*) one that upon accurate inspection and consideration, *judgeth* and giveth sentence. It differs from (*κρίτης*) a *judge*, as adding the act of judging to the *right* and power of judgment; which is sufficient to evince, that the *person* of Christ is here principally intended.

By (*καρδίας*) the "heart," the whole soul and all its faculties, as constituting one rational principle of moral actions, is intended; and so includes the "soul and

spirit" before mentioned. Here two things are ascribed to it.

1. (Ενθυμησεις) *Thoughts*, cogitations; whatever is inwardly conceived (εν τω θυμω) *in the mind*, with a peculiar respect to the irascible appetite, Gen. vi, 5, "The figment of the cogitations of the heart;" the thoughts which are suggested by the inclinations of the affections, with their commotions in the mind.

2. (Εννοιαι) *Designs*, or purposes inwardly framed (εν τω νοω) *in the understanding*; the principles that men are guided by in their actings, according to which they frame their actual purposes and intentions. Upon the whole, the apostle's design in these words is, to declare the intimate and absolute *acquaintance* "the word of God" hath with the inmost frames, purposes, desires, resolutions, and actings of the minds of professors; and the sure *unerring judgment* which he makes of them.

§9. "There is not a creature that is not manifest;" that is, every creature is eminently, illustriously manifest. (Ουκ εστι κτισις) "*There is not a creature,*" any thing created, persons or things,—angels, men, devils,—professors and persecutors, as well as the sincere,—and all things concerning them, their inward frames of mind and heart, their various inclinations and affections; their state and condition, their temptations and secret actings, &c.—(Αφανης) "*That is not manifest.*" The Greek word (Φαινω) is to *appear*, to *shine forth*; and the expression (αφανης) *not manifest*, is opposed to (επιφανης) *illustrious, perspicuous*, eminently manifest. It is more than (αφανλος) "*merely one out of sight,*" Luke xxiv, 31. The negation, therefore, includes a plain, clear, illustrious appearance, nothing shrowding, hiding, or interposing itself to obscure it: (ενωπιον αυτε)

before him; (*in conspectu ejus*) in his sight. Every creature is continually under his view.

§10. "But all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." All agree that this term (*τετραχηλισμενα*) *opened*, is as much as (*πεΦανερωμενα*) *absolutely open* or *manifest*. (*Τραχηλος*) *the neck*, is a word of common use, and thence (*τραχηγιζωμαι*) "to be manifest," must derive its signification from some posture of the "neck;" and as joined here with (*γυμνος*) "naked," it may allude—either to wrestlers and contenders in games, who were stript of their clothes; whence comes (*γυμναζω*) "vigorously to exercise;" and (*γυμνασιον*) "a place of such exercise." Then in contending when one was thrown on his back (*resupinatus*) he was (*τραχηλιζωμενος*) exposed, laid open, with his *throat and neck* upwards; and hence the word comes to signify things that are *open, naked, evident, manifest*,—or, rather, the allusion may be to beasts, which, when slain and stripped of their skins, are hanged with the "neck opened and exposed," so that all may see them. Some add, that the expression (*τραχηλιζειν*) is as much as (*διχοτομειν*) *to divide into parts*, or (*δια της ραχews σχιζειν*) *to cut, cleave*, or divide, *through the backbone*, that all may be discovered. However, it is evident that the apostle, while instructing the Hebrews, hath a great regard to the customs in use among themselves; which consideration makes it probable that here he alludes to the beasts that were sacrificed. When slain, the beast was *flayed* by the priests, whereby its carcass was made (*γυμνον*) *naked*, laid open to the view of all; then were all its entrails exposed by opening the belly and the neck, after which the body was cut through the chinebone, whereby it became (*τετραχηλισμενον*) *opened and divided*; every part of it exposed to view. Thence the apostle—



having compared the word of God before in its operations to a “two-edged sword,” that “pierceth to the dividing asunder of the joints and marrow,” as did the sharp knife or instrument of the sacrificer—here affirms that all things whatever, and so consequently the hearts and ways of professors, were evident, open, and naked before him, as the body of the sacrificed beast was to the priests, when flayed, opened, and cut to pieces—“Unto the eyes of him, with whom we have to do.” He continues the former allusion, and in both the metaphorical expressions, the omniscience of Christ is described, (*προς ου ημιν ο λογος*) “With whom we have to do;” *to whom* we must give an account; or, before *whom* our account is to be made. This interpretation perfectly answers the design of the apostle; for evidencing to us the efficacy and omniscience of the “word of God,” trying all things, and discerning all things, he reminds us of our near concernments in these matters; that we must all give up our final *accounts to, and before* him, who is so intimately acquainted with what we are, and whatever we do. Hence we may draw the following observations:

§11. (II.) *Obs.* 1. It is the way of the Spirit of God to excite us to special duties by proposing to us, and reminding us of such divine properties as, when duly considered, may in an especial manner incline us to those duties. Here the Hebrews are told, that “the word of God” is “living;” to impress their hearts with that awe and reverence of him, which might deter them from backsliding. To stir us up to carefulness, diligence, and spiritual watchfulness, that we give not place to decays in our profession, we are especially put in mind that he is “the living one,” who continually *exerciseth acts of life* towards us. And, indeed, with regard to all duties of obedience, it will be our

wisdom always to consider—what respect the divine properties have to those duties.

§12. *Obs. 2.* The *life* and *power* of Christ are continually exercised about the concernments of the souls of professors; are always and actually efficacious, by his word and spirit. Though the word of the gospel seem weak and despised, yet it is accompanied with the *hidden power* of Christ, which will not fail in its end, 1 Cor. i, 18. A preached gospel is the conveyance of *divine power* to the souls of men; and every impression it makes on the heart is an effect of that power. This may teach us, how to value and esteem it; seeing it is the honored and only way whereby the Lord Christ exerciseth his mediatory power towards us.

§13. *Obs. 3.* The power of Christ in his word is irresistible, as to its designed effects, Isa. lv, 10, 11. By many it is exceedingly slighted; few seem to have any real effects of it upon them, and those who preach it in sincerity are ready to cry out, “Who hath believed our report?” But does not all arise from a mistake, as though it had but *one end* to answer? Had the Lord Christ no other end to accomplish by his word but merely the conversion of souls, it might be said to fail towards the far greater number of them to whom it was preached; but it was with him in his word, as it was in his own person; he was “set for the fall as well as the rising of many in Israel; and for a sign that should be spoken against,” Luke ii, 34. As he was to be to some for a *sanctuary*; so “for a stone of stumbling, and rock of offence to both the houses of Israel; for a gin and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem,” among whom many were to stumble at him, and fall and be broken, Isa. viii, 14, 15. All to whom he is preached, are either raised by him out of their

state of sin and misery, and take sanctuary in him from sin and the law, or they stumble at him through unbelief, and perish eternally. They must all be either saved by his grace, or perish under his wrath. The power of Christ in the word will reach and search out all, for "it pierceth to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and the joints and marrow." So that,

§4. *Obs.* 4. Though men may hide things from themselves and others, yet they cannot exclude the power of Christ in his word from piercing into them. Men are apt strangely to hide, darken, and confound, things between their soul and spirit, that is, their *affections* and their *minds*; herein consists no small part of the deceitfulness of sin; but where he designs the conviction of men, he makes his word *powerful* to discover the secret follies of their minds and affections, the hidden recesses of sin, with the most artful close reserves; and spreads them before their eyes to their own amazement, Psal. iv, 21. So our apostle tells us, that by prophesying, or expounding the word of Christ, the secrets of men's hearts are discovered; that is, *to themselves*; they find the word dividing asunder between their souls and spirits, wherein they fall down and give glory to God, 1 Cor. xiv, 24, 25. Let men arm themselves never so strongly, or their sins be covered with the fairest pretence of profession, Christ by his word will "pierce through all" into their *very hearts*, and having discovered, divided, and scattered all their vain imaginations, he will "judge" them, and decidedly determine their state and condition. Men are apt to please themselves in their spiritual condition, though built on very sandy foundations; and although all their considerations fail them, yet they will maintain a *life of hopes*, however unwarrantable; Isa. ivii, 10. But when the word of Christ, by his power,

enters into their souls and consciences, it utterly casts down all their confidences, and destroys their hopes and expectations. And hereon they either betake themselves wholly to their sins, so to free themselves from their convictions and fears; or sincerely give themselves up to him for relief. To this purpose again it is added, that this "word of God," is "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart;" that is, one that so discerns them, as to put a *difference* between them, and to pass judgment accordingly.

§15. *Obs. 5.* The Lord Christ *discerneth* all inward and spiritual things, in order to his present and future *judgment* of those things, and the persons in whom they are found. Our discerning, and our judging, are things distinct and separate; discerning every thing imperfectly and by parts, we cannot *judge* expeditiously, if we intend to judge wisely; for we must "judge after the sight of our eyes, and reprove after the hearing of our ears;" that is, according as we can, by *weak means*, understand that on which we are to form a judgment. With the word, or Son of God, it is not so; for he, at once discerning all things perfectly and absolutely, in all their causes, circumstances, tendencies, and ends, in the same instant approveth or condemneth them. For this cause, he is said to be of "quick understanding in the fear of the Lord," so as not to "judge after the sight of his eyes, nor reprove after the hearing of his ears," that is, according to the outward appearance of things, or the profession that men make, which is seen and heard; but he "judgeth with righteousness, and reproveth with equity," according to the true *nature of things* which lieth hidden from the eyes of men. Let men not please themselves in their secret reserves; there is not a *thought* in their hearts, though but transient, and never arising to the

consistency of purpose, a pleasing imagination in their minds, but lies continually under the eye of Christ; and at the same instant, that very judgment is passed on them, which shall be pronounced at the last day. Oh, that we could always consider, with what awe and reverence, with what care and diligence, we ought continually to walk before this holy *all-seeing* One! "His eyes are as a flame of fire," Rev. i, 14.

§16. *Obs.* 6. It is a great and difficult matter really and practically to convince professors of the *judging omniscience* of Jesus Christ, "the Word of God." All professors are ready enough to close with Peter in the first part of their confession, "Lord, thou knowest all things;" but when they come to the other; "thou knowest that *I love thee*," they fail. If their minds were fully possessed with the persuasion of it; were they continually under the power thereof, it would certainly influence them to that care, diligence, and watchfulness, which are evidently wanting in most of them: but the love of present things, the deceitfulness of sin, the power of temptation, the causes and businesses of life, vain and uncertain hopes, effectually divert their minds from a due consideration of it; though nothing be of more use to them in the whole course of their walking with God.

§17. *Obs.* 7. That the beginnings of the declensions in profession, or backslidings from Christ and the gospel, are secret, deep, and *hardly discoverable* by us, being open and naked only to the all-discerning eye of Christ. Hence all those cautions which the gospel gives the professing Hebrews against this evil, and concerning the subtilties and surprisals wherewith it is attended; see chap. iii, 13; and xii, 15. Everywhere he requires more than ordinary watchfulness and diligence in this matter; and intimates, that unless

they are exceeding heedful, there will be no preventing a surprisal and seduction into some degrees, at least, of declension and backsliding from the gospel; one way or other, there will be some loss or decay—in faith, love, or works.

The *Asian churches* are a sad exemplification of this truth; in a short time the most of those churches were greatly *fallen off*, and yet *no one* of them seemed to have had the least sense of their own decays. In this state the Lord Christ comes to form a judgment concerning them, as all things lay “open and naked” under his eye. He will so deal with them, that all the churches shall know it is he who *searcheth the reins and hearts*, Rev. ii, 23. And what work doth he make among these secure churches? one is charged with *loss of love and faith*, another of *works*, a third with *lukewarmness* and carnal pride, a fourth with *spiritual death*, as to the generality of its members, and most of them with various decays and miscarriages which themselves took no notice of. But *his eye*—staying not upon the outside of things, be they never so gay or glorious, but piercing to the secret and first conceptions of sin and declensions from himself—found them out, and passed judgment on them in righteousness and equity. The subtilty and deceitfulness of indwelling sin, Satan, and the world; the fallacious reasonings of deceitful principles,—extenuating duties, aggravating difficulties, and suggesting false rules of profession—are the principal causes of backsliding.

The beginnings of declensions from Christ and the gospel are deep and hidden, because oftentimes they are carried on by very secret and imperceptible degrees. Some men are plunged into apostasy by some notorious crimes, or by the power of some great temptations. In these it is easy to discover the beginning

of their fall; as it was with Judas, when the devil entered into him, and prevailed with him, for the sake of money, to betray his Master. And many such there are in the world, who, for the sake of *money*, or what ends in money, part with their professed interest in Christ and the gospel. And if they get more than Judas did, it is because they meet with better chapmen in the world than were the priests and pharisees. The fall of such men from their profession is like the dying of a man by a fever; the first incursion of the disease, with its whole progress, is manifest. The spiritual decays of others is like an *hectic distemper*, which at first is hardly known, and in its progress hardly cured. Small negligences and omissions are admitted, and the soul is habituated to them, and so a progress is made to greater evils. Besides, revolvers and backsliders do their utmost endeavors to *hide* the beginnings of their falls from themselves and others. By false and corrupt reasonings they labor "to blind their own eyes," and to hide these evils from themselves. Their "own hearts seduce them, before they feed on ashes."

§18. *Obs.* 8. A due and holy consideration at all times of the *all-seeing eye of Jesus Christ* is a great preservative against backslidings and declensions. Some with *Sardis*, are ready to please themselves whilst they keep up such a profession as others, with whom they walk, approve of, or at least cannot blame; others with *Laodicea*, think all is well whilst they approve themselves, and have no troublesome accusations rising against their peace in their own consciences, when it may be their consciences themselves are debauched, bribed, or secure. For many regard not smaller things, which neither others observe to their disreputation, nor themselves are affected with to their disquiet, and thereby are insensibly betrayed into

apostasy; one neglect follows another, and one evil is added to another, until a breach be made upon them “great like the sea,” that cannot be healed. Herein then lies a great preservative; let us consider constantly that the eye of Christ, with whom we have to do, and to whom an account of all must one day be given, is upon us; and it cannot but keep us jealous over ourselves, lest there should any “defiling root of bitterness” spring up in us.—Let us moreover reflect, that the Lord Christ doth not behold these evils by *mere* intuition; but as one deeply *concerned*, and as it were troubled with them; for by these things his good Spirit is grieved and vexed; and great reproach is cast upon his name. Where, therefore, there is any sincerity, there will be a continual care about these things, on account of the concernment of Christ in them. And farther:—We may do well to remember that he so sees all our neglects and decays, as in an especial manner to take notice of their sinfulness and demerit; there is no omission of duty, no neglect of the acting or stirring up of any grace, no sinful miscarriage, or worldly compliance, wherein the beginning of our decays may consist: but—together with all their causes and occasions, their aggravating circumstances, their end and tendency—are all under the eye of Christ, and so their *whole guilt is spread before him*. And oftentimes there is a more provoking guilt in some circumstances of things, than in the things themselves: he sees all the unkindness and unthankfulness from whence our decays proceed; all the contempt of him, his love and grace, wherewith they are attended; the advantage of Satan and the world in them; and the great end of final apostasy whereunto they tend, if not by grace prevented. All these things greatly aggravate the guilt of our spiritual



decays; and the whole provocation lies continually under his eye. Hence his thoughts of these things are not as our thoughts commonly are; but it is our wisdom to make *his* rule, the rule and measure of *ours*. Again; He *sees* all things of this kind in such a manner, as that he will *pass judgment* accordingly. Alas! it is not the world we are to be judged by; if it were, men might *hide* their sins from it; nor is it the saints or angels, who discover not the secret frames of our hearts, but it is "He who is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things." And how shall backsliders in heart escape his righteous judgment?

§19. *Obs. 9.* A due consideration of the omniscience of Christ is a great encouragement to the meanest and weakest believers, who are upright and sincere. Hence he says of himself, that "he will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax," Matt. xii, 20. Be our strength like that of a "bruised reed," which is next to none at all, he will not bruise it; nay, he will take care to cherish and add strength to it. Nor shall the "smoking flax," the least degree imaginable of grace, be quenched while under his eye and care. Grace in its first communication is *new* to the soul, which it knows not how to try, or measure; Satan and indwelling corruption use all means possible to darken the mind, that it may not aright apprehend the work of grace upon it; the many self-deceivings which they either observe in others, or read of in scripture, make them (and that justly) jealous over their own hearts, lest they should deceive themselves with hypocrisy. With many other reasonings of the same nature they are entangled; but against all these perplexities much relief may be administered from this consideration, viz. that the Lord Christ with whom we have to do, sees, knows, and approves of the *least*

*spark* of heavenly fire that is kindled in us by his Spirit. The least seed of grace that is planted in us, is under his eye and care, to preserve, water, and cherish it. He takes notice of the least *endeavors of grace* in the heart against the power of sin; he perceives the *principle* and *actings* of grace in that very sorrow and trouble wherewith the soul is even overwhelmed in apprehension of the want of it; he knows that much of many a soul's trouble for *want of grace*, is from grace; he sees the love that works in trouble for want of faith; and the *faith* that works in trouble for want of holiness. These things he takes care of. How small soever that grace be which he discerns in the souls of his children, he accepts of it, and takes care for its preservation and increase.

VERSES 14--16.

*Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

§1. The subject proposed. §2—12. (I) The words explained. § 13. (II.) Observations 1. Great opposition will be made to the permanency of believers in their profession. §14. 2. It is our duty, in the midst of all oppositions, to hold our profession firm and steadfast unto the end. §15—18. 3. Believers have great encouragement, in the constancy of their profession, from the priesthood of Jesus Christ. §19—22. 4. The church hath a perpetual advantage in the union of our nature to the person of the Son of God, as our high priest. §23, 24. 5. There is many a season, in the course of our profession, wherein we shall need special aid. §25. Other observations.

§1. **I**N these verses the apostle gives us a summary improvement of all the foregoing discourses; and makes a transition to his great design. Let us,

I. Attend to the several parts of the words, and

II. Improve the subject by suitable observations.

§2. (I.) ΕΧΟΥΝΤΕΣ ΕΝ, *Habentes igitur*) *having therefore*; or, as ours, “seeing then that we have;” denoting a consequence, not by way of argument, but of duty. “Seeing then that we have;” (ΑΡΧΙΕΡΕΑ ΜΕΓΑΝ, *Pontificem magnum*), “a great high priest.” (ΑΡΧΙΕΡΕΥΣ) “High Priest,” refers to Aaron or his successor, and therefore the epithet (ΜΕΛΑΣ) *great*, is added by way of *eminency*, and is accumulative with respect to Aaron; he is a great High Priest in comparison of him, and exalted above him, more excellent, more glorious than he. For the special design of the apostle is to compare him—not with any inferior priests, but—with Aaron, as we shall farther see. Therefore, a “great High Priest,” is one eminently, excellently, gloriously so.

§3. “That is passed into the heavens.” The verb is (ΔΙΕΡΧΟΜΑΙ,) *pertranseo* to *pass THROUGH*; that is, one place into another; which interpretation alone answers the apostle’s design. The “heavens” are taken two ways; *First*, for the resting place of blessed souls, and palace of the great King, where is his throne, and where thousands of his holy ones stand ministering before him. *This* heaven the Lord Christ did not pass *through*, but *into*, when he was “taken up *into* glory,” 1 Tim. iii, 16. There he sits on the right hand of the Majesty on high; and these heavens must receive him until the time of restitution, Acts iii, 27. *Secondly*, the “heavens” are taken for the *air*, as when mention is made of the “fowls of *heaven*.” And concerning *them* our apostle says again of our High Priest, chap. vii, 26, “made higher than the heavens;” he passed *through* them, and was exalted above them. Towards these ætherial regions the disciples looked when he was taken up into glory, Acts i, 9, 10, so Ephes. iv, 10. “He ascended up far above all *heavens*.” He passed

through them, and ascended above them, into that which is called the "third heaven," or the "heaven of heavens."

The allusion is evidently made to the high priest, and to what he typically represented to the church of old; the most signal part of whose office consisted in his annual entrance into the most holy place, on the day of expiation. Thus, Jesus, answerably, passed through the veil of these heavens into the glorious presence of God, to appear there as our intercessor. (Ἰησεν τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ) "*Jesus the Son of God.*" Translators do not well express the emphasis of these words by reason of the *article* (τὸν υἱόν) *THE Son*, eminently, peculiarly; *THAT Son of God*, that is, the natural, only begotten Son of the Father. The name "*Jesus*," doth not in this place so much denote him by his work of *saving*, according to the strict signification of that term, but rather denotes his *human nature*, by partaking of which he became a merciful high priest.

§4. (Κραλωμεν της ὁμολογιας) "Let us hold fast *the profession*;" that is, which we make, or have made, and so *our* profession, as we properly supply the words; which is "*our professed subjection to the gospel of Christ*," 2 Cor. ix, 13, or, the subjection of our souls in the acknowledgement of the power and authority of Jesus Christ in the gospel. To complete this, there is required that we make a *solemn declaration* of our subjection to the gospel in these things, with prudence, humble confidence, and constancy; for with the mouth confession is made unto salvation, Rom. x, 10. Our *profession* is to be turned into *confession*, or we lose it. The open avowing of the Lord Christ, his ways and worship, under persecution, is the *touch-stone* of all profession, Matt. x, 32, 33, 1 Cor. iii, 13. This is the profession we are to "*hold fast*," (κραλωμεν) which

intimates a severe endeavor; to hold a thing (*totis viribus*,) “with all our strength,” by all lawful means, with resolution and contention of mind. For the word is from (*κρᾶλος*) *power*, strength, efficacy, which are to be exerted in thus holding fast, Rev. ii, 25. “That which you have, (*κράνησατε*) “*hold fast*,” with all care, against all opposition, “till I come,” so Rev. iii, 12, *Κράτει ὁ ἐχεις*, “*Hold fast*, that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown;” that is, with all thy might, with all diligence and contention of mind, as a man would hold fast his *crown* should any attempt to take it from him. So then this verse containeth the prescription of a duty, with a motive and encouragement to the due performance of it: seeing then we have a great High Priest, which is passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, “let us hold fast,” &c.

§5. “For we have not an High Priest that cannot.” The double negation strongly affirms, he is such a one as *can be affected*. “We have an High Priest.” The apostle lets the Hebrews know, that in the gospel state there is no loss of privilege in any thing. Had they an High Priest, who, with his office, was the life and glory of their profession and worship? We also, saith he, have an High Priest, who is, in like manner, the life and glory of our profession and worship. He assures the Jews that they lost no advantage by the gospel, but had all their former privileges unspeakably heightened and increased.

§6. The church never lost any *privilege* once granted, by any change or alteration that God made in his ordinances of worship, or dispensation towards it; but still keeping what it had before, it was carried on towards that completeness and perfection which it is capable of in this world, and which it hath received by Jesus Christ. Presently upon giving of the *first*

*promise*, God instituted some kind of worship, as *sacrifices*, to be a means of intercourse between him and sinners, by the grace and truth of that promise; after this he made sundry *additional* ordinances of worship, all of them instructive in the nature of that promise, and directive towards the accomplishment of it. And still there was an *increase* of grace and privilege in them all; “they were mountains of myrrh and hills of frankincense,” on which the church waited till the day break, and the shadows fled away, Cant. iv, 6. All along the church was still a *gainer*. But when the time of the actual accomplishment of the promise came, then were all the former privileges realized to believers, *new ones added*, and *nothing lost*. We have neither lost sacrifice nor High Priest; but have them all in a more eminent and excellent manner. And this is enough to secure the application of the *initial seal* of the covenant to the *infant seed* of believers. For whereas it was granted to the church under the Old Testament, as a signal favor and *spiritual privilege*; it is derogatory to the glory of Christ and honor of the gospel, to suppose that the church is now deprived of it; for in the whole system and frame of worship, “God had the better things for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.”

§7. “That cannot be *touched with a feeling*,” who cannot be *affected with a sense*; who cannot *suffer with*, or *sympathize*. This word, (*συμπάθειω*) includes,

1. A *concern* in the troubles, sufferings, or evils of others, on account of any *common interest* wherein persons are united. As in the natural body, sometimes when one part is afflicted with a disease, another part is *affected* with it, although it cannot be absolutely said to be *ill-affected*; for no part of the *disease* is in it; but it may be said (*συμπασχειν*) “not to be free from

being affected," though not upon its own account. This suffering is by consent, or, in virtue of the *harmony* there is in the same nature; so we have a sense of the sufferings of human nature in any man whatever.

2. It includes a *propensity to relieve* such in those troubles or sufferings, whether we have power to effect that relief or no. We may not be able to relieve in some cases where we are concerned; and in some it may not be *lawful*; but if there be no such inclination there is no *sympathy*.

3. Properly it contains in it a *commotion of affections* which we express by (*condolentia*) "condolence;" a moving of affections in ourselves upon the sufferings of others. And these things are ascribed to our High Priest, on account of his *union* with us, both in his participation of our nature, and the communication of a new nature to us, whereby we become members of his body, and even *one* with him. Thus he is deeply concerned in all our infirmities, sorrows, and sufferings; and this is attended with a propensity to relieve us, according to the rule and tenor of the covenant; and herewith, during the time of our trials, he hath a real motion of affections in his holy nature, which he took on him for that very end, chap. ii, 17, 18. (*ταῖς ἀσθενείαις*) "*Our infirmities.*" Whereas it is here mentioned *generally*, without restriction to any *special kind* of infirmities, it may justly be extended to *all weaknesses*, or any pressures we may be sensible of. But whereas, in the following words, the reason of the ability of Christ our High Priest to be affected with a sense of infirmities, is placed in his "being tempted;" it is manifest that the weaknesses here *chiefly* intended are such, as respect afflictions, temptations, or persecution for the gospel.

§8. In the next words a special reason is assigned of this merciful ability of our High Priest: "but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin." The particle ( $\delta\epsilon$ ) *but*, is contradictory to what was before denied; he is not such a one as cannot be affected; "but," one who was himself tempted; that is, he *can be affected* with a sense of our infirmities, *because* he was tempted. ( $\Pi\epsilon\pi\epsilon\iota\rho\alpha\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\nu$ ) *tempted*; that is, tried, exercised; for no more doth the word originally import. Whatever moral evil is in temptation, proceeds from the depraved invention of the tempter, or from the sinful weakness of the tempted. In itself, and materially considered, it is but a *trial* which may have a good or bad effect. "Every way," ( $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\ \pi\alpha\nu\tau\alpha$ ) *in all things*; that is, from all means and instruments of temptations, by all ways of it, and in all things wherein as our High Priest he was concerned. "Like as we are," ( $\kappa\alpha\theta\prime\ \omicron\mu\omicron\iota\omicron\delta\eta\sigma\iota\alpha$ , *secundum similitudinem*) *in like manner*: there is a plain reference to the temptation of *others*; for whatever is *like*, is of necessity like a *something else*, something that answers it; that is, trials and temptations of believers, what press on them by reason of their weakness. ( $\Χ\omega\rho\iota\varsigma\ \alpha\mu\alpha\rho\tau\iota\alpha\varsigma$ ) *without sin*; sin, with respect to temptation, may be considered, either as the *principle*, or the *effect* of it; in the *first* sense men are tempted to sin, by sin itself; to actual, by habitual sin; to outward, by indwelling sin, James i, 14, 15, and this is the greatest source of our temptations. In the *second* sense, sin is what temptation tends to; what it designs and produceth. Now in what respect was our High Priest tempted "without sin?" If the denial of sin relate to the *former*, then the apostle preserves in us due apprehensions of the *purity* and holiness of Christ, that we may not imagine he was liable to any temptations to sin from within. If the *latter*



*be intended*, then all *success* of temptation upon our High Priest is denied. We are tempted by Satan, the world, and our own lusts, that constantly aim to bring us more or less to sin and guilt; and their temptation, especially if vigorous and pressing, hath, alas! too often its hateful *effect*. It was quite otherwise with our High Priest; whatever temptation he was exposed to, or exercised with, had not, in the least degree, any bad *effect* on him; he was still, in all things, absolutely “without sin.” Now the exception being absolute, I see no reason why it should not be applied to sin in *both* respects. He neither was tempted *by sin*, such was the holiness of his nature; nor did his temptation *produce any sin*, such was the perfection of his obedience.

§9. “Let us therefore come boldly” Seeing we have an High Priest, such a one as we have described; (*προσερχομεθα*) *let us come*; the word hath respect to the *access*, either of the *people* with their sacrifices to the altar, or of the *priests* to the holy place, with prayers and supplications; (*μελὰ παρρησίας*) *with boldness*. This, as it hath a special opposition to the *vail* that was on the Jews, and is to this day, keeping them in darkness and fear, denotes *boldness* and *confidence* of mind, freedom from fear, shame, and discouragements. There are therefore two things that the apostle would have us delivered from, in our drawing near to the throne of grace with our prayers and supplications, on account of our High Priest.

1. A *spirit of bondage* working fear, which was upon the people under the Old Testament in the worship of God. Christ was made under the law, to deliver us from the dread and bondage of it; whereby also we receive “the adoption of children,” and therewith “the Spirit of Christ.” We draw near to God

with the liberty,—the unshaken (though respectful) boldness, and ingenuousness of children, crying, “Abba Father,” with the genuine actions of faith and love.

2. A *disbelief of acceptance* arising from a sense of our own unworthiness. From an apprehension of God’s greatness and terror there arises a dread in persons under the law, and from the consideration of their own vileness, there arises a distrust in sinners accompanied with fear and despondency, as if there were no hope for them. This also the apostle would remove on the account of the *priesthood* of Christ.

§10. (Τὸ θρόνον τῆς χάριτος) *To the throne of grace.* A “throne” is the place from whence *judgment* is exercised, and *mercy* administered; and therefore our coming to God, in his worship, for grace or mercy, is said to be coming to his *throne*. Or, there may be an allusion to the mercy-seat which, being laid on the ark with a coronet of gold round about it, and shadowed with the cherubim, was the “throne,” or seat of God in that most solemn representation of his presence among his people. For that which the apostle calls here our “coming to the throne of grace,” he chap. x, 19, expresseth by “drawing nigh with boldness unto the holiest;” the place where the ark and mercy-seat were placed. The Lord Christ is not proposed as the *object* of our coming to the throne of grace, but as the *means* of it; “*through him* we have an access by one Spirit unto the *Father*,” Eph. ii, 18, On account of his undertaking for us, the atonement he hath made, his appearance before God on our behalf, we may come *in his name* with *confidence of acceptance* to the throne of God; that is, to God as *gracious* in Christ; as exercising grace and mercy towards them who, through the Lord Jesus, come unto him.

§11. (Ἰνα λαβωμεν ἔλεον) “That we may *receive* mercy;” the word (λαμβάνω) doth sometimes signify to “obtain,” to acquire; and so by most interpreters it is here rendered, (*ut obtineamus, ut consequamur*) as by ours; but the first and most usual signification of the word is only to “*receive*,” or take; and I see no reason why that sense of it may not be most proper in *this* place. For the apostle seems to intimate that mercy is *prepared* for us; only our access to God by Christ with boldness is required to our being made actual partakers of it. And this answers his prescription of *boldness*, or spiritual confidence, in our approaches to the throne of grace for *receiving* that mercy which through Christ, is already *prepared* for us. “That we may receive (ἐλεος) mercy;” which must intend the principle or cause of our assistance and deliverance. In short, to “obtain mercy,” is to be made partakers of gracious help and support from the kindness and benignity of God in Christ, when we are in straits and distresses, which springs indeed from the same root with pardoning grace, and is therefore called “mercy.”

§12. (Και χάριν ευρωμεν) “And that we may *find* grace;” or rather *obtain* grace; for so is the word often used. And to “obtain *grace*,” implies, to find or obtain *favor* or *favorable acceptance* with God, particularly with a view to that special assistance, which upon particular addresses to him we obtain; which is farther determined by the next words: (εἰς βοήθειαν ευχαιρος) “for *help* in time of need,” that is, *succor* and aid afforded to any upon their cry. (Θεῖν εἰς βοήν) *to run in to assist* upon the cry of any, is the original and genuine signification. And this help is (ευχαιρος) *seasonable*, in its proper time or season, Prov. xv, 23, “A word in its time, or its season, how good

it is?" "Help," that is, fit, suitable, "seasonable,"—on the part of God that gives it, of the persons that receive it, of the time wherein it is afforded, and of the end for which it is bestowed—is intended by the word. This kind of help, it becometh the wisdom and greatness of God to give; and it is an impression on the minds of *men* by nature, that such kind of help is from God. Grace therefore effectual for our assistance, "in every time of need," upon our cry to God in Christ, is here intended.

§13. (II.) *Obs.* 1. Great opposition will be made to the permanency of believers in their profession. This the word of exhortation to it plainly intimates. (*injecta manu fortiter retinere*) "to lay hold of a thing, and to retain it with all our might," as if it were ready every moment to be taken from us with a violent and strong hand. It is to keep a thing as a man keeps his treasure, when it is ready to be seized on by thieves and robbers. This argues great *opposition*, and no small *hazard*. So our Savior informs us, Mat. vii, 25. When men hear, they "build an house" by profession; and when this house is built, the *rains* will descend, and the *floods* will come, and the *winds* will blow and beat upon it: profession will be assaulted and pressed by all manner of hazardous and dangerous oppositions; and if this house be not well secured, it will fall, if our profession be not well guarded, it will be lost. What our Lord Jesus told Peter with respect to this very matter, holds true concerning all professors. When he ventured to speak with *much confidence*, (from present convictions of duty, no doubt, and resolution for its performance, that he would abide in his profession) and "never forsake him," whatever other men might do; our Lord answers him, "Simon,

Simon, Satan hath sought to winnow thee," Luke xxii, 31, 32. He minds him, that although he had called him "Peter," for the unmoveableness of that *rock* which his faith was fixed on; yet he would appear in himself to be but "Simon" still; a man exposed to danger and easy to be prevailed against: and therefore he might do well in the midst of his confidence, to consider his dangers, and the surprisals that he might be overtaken with. No otherwise is the condition of all professors, the best and meanest, the strongest and weakest. Could we but take *one view* of that constant preparation there is amongst principalities and powers, those spiritual wickednesses in high places, and in the deceitfulness of sin that dwelleth in us, to oppose our profession, we would either constantly stand upon our guard to defend it; or presently give it up as that which is not tenable. See Eph. vi, 10—13.

§14. *Obs. 2.* It is our duty in the midst of all opposition, to hold our profession firm and steadfast unto the end. The *principle* of this profession is, faith in God by Jesus Christ; the *fruits* of it are—the whole obedience of faith, or a conversation becoming the gospel, whereby we adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all holiness and godliness; a constant observance of all the ordinances and institutions of worship appointed by divine authority; with an open confession of him at all times. We are to "hold" it, as before noticed, with watchfulness, diligence, constancy, and our utmost endeavor in all. And this duty hath respect to the contrary sins of—*apostasy*, or a total desertion of our profession; and of—*declension*, or going back gradually from our diligence and progress. Where growth is not, profession is not held firm,

§15. *Obs.* 3. Believers have great encouragement and assistance in the constancy of their profession, from the *priesthood* of Jesus Christ. For,

(1.) The Lord Christ is an High Priest; and we have a relation to him, he is “*our High Priest,*” the High Priest of “*our profession;*” not only to *direct* us in our profession, but also to *assist* us in it. The difficulty of this duty lies in the *opposition* that is made to it by sin, and Satan, and the world, as we have shewn; and he that hath not found it, never yet knew what it was to “*profess*” the gospel. And we can never be jealous enough of our own hearts and ways, lest we should be an example unto others, as others have been to us: but herein lies our *help*; whilst we are in this condition our High Priest compassionately pitieth us. Chap. ii, 17, 18. From the habitation of his holiness he looks on his laboring, suffering disciples; is afflicted in all their afflictions, and is full of compassion towards them. “*So, saith he, was I tempted, so was I opposed; and what thus befalls them is for my sake, and not for their own.*” Whose heart will not the consideration of this refresh? Whose spirit will it not revive? But he does more; he gives us *actual help* and assistance in this case. Our faith will be violently opposed by *Satan*; faith’s overthrow is his principal design, Luke xxi, 31, 32. No such irreconcilable enemies as faith and the devil. But our High Priest hath contended with him—conquered him—bound him—spoiled him—bruised his head, and triumphed over him. Gen. iii, 15, Col. ii, 15, Heb. ii, 14, 15. And shall we suffer ourselves to be deprived of our profession by one thus dealt with in our behalf? No; Christ assisting, he shall not prevail in his attempt. Again, do our own corruptions “*fight against our*

souls," 1 Pet. ii, 11, and tend to death? Jam. i, 14. Against *these* also there is relief in our High Priest. For he was manifested to destroy the *works* of the devil, 1 John iii, 8, or all the *effects* of his first temptation in our hearts; there is a remedy provided in his grace, his blood and Holy Spirit. Moreover, does the *world* oppose? He *hath* overcome it for us, and he *will* overcome it in us. Who, therefore, would not be encouraged to contend earnestly, to persevere in that profession wherein they are sure they shall be assisted? Finally; is their faith assaulted with the thoughts of the sinfulness and unworthiness of their persons? Or do they find that even the duties themselves, wherein their profession consists, are so weak, so mixed, and imperfect, that it is hard for them to conceive how they should find acceptance with God? Against all these considerations believers have relief in their High Priest; for in this matter lies the *principal* part of his *office*, having undertaken to render our persons and duties accepted with God, both in his oblation and intercession.

§16. (2.) He is a "great High Priest:" he is so, not only in compassion of *others* so called, but also absolutely. If, therefore, God appointed destruction to him who forsook the worship and service of the law, under the guidance of Aaron and his sons, what must their portion be who shall desert the worship of the New Testament, when we have an High Priest far more excellent and glorious?—*Our* High Priest is "great," because he is one who hath triumphantly "*passed through the heavens,*" and who hath been received into the special presence of God, or, as our apostle expresseth it, 1 Tim. iii, 16, "Received up into glory." He left the earth from the Mount of Olives. This was the mountain to which "the glory of the

Lord went up," Ezek. xi, 23, when it left the *temple* and city of *Jerusalem*. And to this he who is the brightness of Divine glory, *went up*; there was his last bodily presence on the earth; with him the glory of God utterly departed from the temple and city. Here he was taken up, while his disciples were (*ατενιζοντες*) *earnestly*, with care and love, with diligence and delight, *looking on*. Those who had not long before seen him hanging on the cross, between two thieves, bleeding and dying, now saw him gloriously and triumphantly taken up into heaven. He had now finished his work, having fully conquered the first *apostate*, the great enemy of God, and spoiled him of his power; and was returning into that glory which he had left for a season to engage in the difficult and perilous service of subduing all the adversaries of God. And now was all heaven prepared for his *triumphant reception!* As when a great conqueror of old returned from a far country, when he had subdued the enemies of his people, and brought home the leaders of them captives, all his *citizens* went forth with applauses, and shouts of joy, to meet him; Col. ii, 15, so was it with the glorious inhabitants of heaven, upon the return of this victorious *Captain of Salvation*. The everlasting gates were opened, and this King of Glory entered in. The psalmist, when treating of the glorious ascension of Christ into his kingdom and throne, Psal. lxxvii, 5, 6, expresseth it thus: "God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet. Sing praises to God; sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises." His *attendants* in his "passage through the heavens," are also described: Psal. lxxviii, 17, 18, "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels; the Lord is among them. as in Sinai, in the holy place. Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast



led captivity captive." And this our apostle expresseth, Col. ii, 15, "He spoiled principalities and powers," all the fallen apostate angels, "making a shew of them openly in his triumph." He took them along with him in chains, tied, as it were, to his chariot wheels, making a shew of them to the citizens of heaven. He shewed them openly, as conquered and fully subdued, remanding them to their prison, until the time of their final doom. Thus did he "pass through the heavens," and all the glory of God was laid open for his reception; all saints and angels coming forth to meet him, to congratulate that success, the fruits of which they had before enjoyed. He was received gloriously into the highest heavens, the habitation of the blessed; *there* had he his entertainment and refreshment, after the travail of his soul; *then* was the time of his espousals, the day of the gladness of his heart. This was the time of heaven's triumph! There is joy in heaven upon the repentance of one sinner; and what may we suppose was there when HE, the author of the old, and the head of the new creation, was received into his glory! No heart can conceive, much less can a tongue express, the glorious reception of his human nature in heaven, and its consequent exaltation!

§17. But who is this high Priest? He is "Jesus the Son of God." Here is another source of his "greatness," the consideration of his name and person. Before the entrance of sin, there was no need of the office of priesthood between God and man; if man, therefore had not continued in that state wherein he was made, there would have been no such office. For it is the office of a priest to represent them acceptably to God, who in their own persons might not appear before him. But sin being entered into the world, there was no more worship to be performed

by the sinner immediately to God. Two cannot walk together unless they be agreed, Amos iii, 3. That the worship of God might be restored again in the world, it was indispensably necessary, that some one must interpose between sinners and the Holy God. Should they approach him immediately, in their *own* names he would be to them a "consuming fire," Isa. xxvii, 4, 5. And here because God would not lose the glory of his grace, and other holy excellencies of his nature, but would have a revenue of glory continued to himself from the worship of his creatures here on earth, and because in his love he would not have all sinners to perish under the curse of the old covenant which they had broken, he found out, in the deep counsel of his will, the office of priesthood, viz. that there should be ONE to transact the whole worship of sinners in the presence of God for them, and render what they should do themselves acceptable unto him in this condition, no *creature* could undertake the office of being a Priest; for the first thing he undertakes must be to make *atonement*.

The Son of God undertakes to be this Priest for sinners. "We have a great High Priest, Jesus the Son of God." The words are expressive of his whole *person*, and each nature therein is also distinctly signified.

1. "The Son of God" denotes the divine person and nature. Here the sacred truth of the Trinity of Persons in the divine essence openeth itself to the creatures. The nature or being of God is absolutely or numerically *one*; all his natural properties are essentially the same; and all his operations are *undivided*, as being the effects of one principle, one power, one wisdom. Hence it could not by any *such acts* be manifested, that there was more than one per-

son in that one nature or being. But now, in these actings of the persons in the Trinity, *ad intra*, where one person is as it were the *object* of the other persons acting, the sacred truth of the *plurality of persons*, in the same single undivided essence, is gloriously manifested. The Son undertaking to become an High Priest for sinners openly declares the eternal Word to be distinct from the person of the Father. And in these distinct and mutual actings of the divine persons is the mysterious truth of the Holy Trinity most safely contemplated. Here also the mysterious *fountain of divine grace*, the springs of life and salvation which are with God, are opened. These things flow from the *counsel* that was between the Father and Son, when he undertook to be an High Priest for us. Grace and mercy are the accomplishment of those counsels. On the divine priesthood of Christ also depended all that religion, and all those institutions of worship, which were of old in the church. Upon the entrance of sin, there was an end put to all the religion that was in the world, as to any glory to God, or advantage to the souls of men. How came it then to be restored? Wherefore did God appoint a priesthood, sacrifices, and worship? What was aimed at, or what could be effected thereby? Men were still sinners, obnoxious to the law and its curse; and of what signification could their service be? Here lay the invisible foundations of this new order of things; the Son of God had made an interposition for sinners, undertaken to be their HIGH PRIEST, to reconcile them to God, and therefore to make their worship acceptable.

§18. 2. This Son of God is "Jesus," which denotes his *human* nature. Jesus is the name of a man; "She shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus," Matt. i, 21. Every High Priest, saith our

apostle, is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices unto God; and therefore of necessity he who would be our High Priest must have *somewhat to offer*; somewhat of his *own*. And what had the "Son of God," absolutely considered, as his own to offer? All things necessarily required in the matter and form of an *offering*, are eternally incompatible with the infinite excellency of the divine nature. Shall he then take an offering out of the works of creation? Shall he take the blood of bulls and goats for this purpose, as did Aaron? The offering indeed of these things might *represent* the sacrifice that should take away sin; but take away sin itself it could not. For what wisdom or *equity* is there in this, that whereas man had sinned, other brute creatures, which were none of his own, (having forfeited his right to them) should be an acceptable sacrifice in his stead? Besides, what proportion did the blood of bulls and goats bear to the justice of God, that satisfaction for sin should be made to it thereby? Should then the Son of God have taken and appointed any *one man* to be a sacrifice for others? But every man is a *sinner*; the sacrifice of any one would have been a provocation to God. And shall we suppose that he would allow of a real *expiatory sacrifice*, which was leprous all over? It would have been so far from yielding a sweet savor to God, from being an atonement for all men, for any one man, for the man himself that should have been offered, that it would have been the highest provocation to the eyes of his glory. Wherefore this "Son of God," became himself "*Jesus*;" took human nature, the seed of Abraham, into union with himself, that he might have of his *own to offer* unto God. And this, by its *oneness* with our nature that had sinned, being itself not touched with sin, was meet to be offered for us; and so God redeem-

ed his church “with his own blood,” Acts xx, 28. Thus our High Priest is Jesus the Son of God; which the apostle proposeth for our encouragement to steadfastness in our profession.

§19. *Obs.* 4. The church of God hath a standing perpetual advantage, in the union of our nature to the person of the Son of God, as our High Priest. We all acknowledge this, on account of the sacrifice he offered for us; but are apt to think that this work being well over, what yet remains to be done for us may be as well discharged by him who is *only* God; for since Jesus dies no more, what profit is there in his flesh? On the contrary, many and great are the advantages of the *ressurrection* of the body of Christ, and therein of his human nature; for he revived, “that he might be Lord both of the dead and living,” Rom. xiv, 9. And this was the *testimony* that he was discharged from the penalty of the law, and the whole debt for which he had undertaken to make satisfaction; Acts ii, 24; Rom. xiii, 33, 34. Without this we could have said of him only as the disciples did, when they knew not of his resurrection; “we trusted it had been he who should have redeemed Israel,” Luke xxiv, 21. And hereby he had an illustrious and uncontrollable testimony given to his being “the Son of God,” Rom. i, 4. Hereby also he laid the foundation, and gave an infallible *pledge* of the future blessed resurrection, which all that believe in him shall obtain. The exaltation of *our nature in glory* was needful for the support and consolation of the church; and, what deserved particular notice, hence his ability *to be affected with a sense of our infirmities* and sufferings, for this is appropriated to him on account of his *human nature*. “He can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.”

§20. This passion of his may be considered four ways:

1. As it is an eminent *virtue in human nature*, as absolutely innocent; Jesus being "holy and undefiled, and separate from sinners." Now, though in that blessed state wherein we were created, there was no *actual* object on which we could exercise compassion, seeing every thing was at rest, in its proper place and order; yet was there no virtue more inlaid in our natural constitution, as being absolutely inseparable from goodness and benignity upon a supposition of a suitable object.

2. As *a grace of the Spirit*. For, besides the spotless innocency and purity of our nature in him, there was a super-addition of all grace to it, by virtue of its union with the person of the Son of God, and the unction it had from the Holy Spirit. Hence there was an *all-fulness* of grace communicated unto him; for he received not the Spirit and his graces by measure, John iii, 34. Of this fulness, "compassion" is an eminent part; for of this kind are all the principal fruits of the Spirit, Gal. v, 22, 23, and by this, in a peculiar manner, did he make a representation of God's nature to us, as full of pity, compassion, and tender affections. And here,

3. He had a *peculiar furniture* of graces, virtues, habits, and inclinations, suited to the worthy discharge of his office in our behalf. The Spirit of the Lord was upon him, and peculiarly anointed him to that end, Isa. xi, 2—4, chap. lxi, 1—3. Thus was he every way furnished, as to his nature, for mercy and compassion.

4. He took an *experience* of such infirmities and sufferings in himself, as are the proper objects of compassion when found in others.

§21. By these means is the nature of our High Priest filled with tenderness and sympathy. The foundation of their exercise towards us lies in the *one-ness* of his nature and ours; and these things belonging to the pure constitution of his nature, and receiving their improvement by the unction of the Spirit, are not lessened by his present glorification. For they all belong to him, on account of his *office*, and, therefore, he continuing still in the exercise of the same office, their continuation is also necessary. And hence it is, that he gave so many particular instances of his retaining the *same* human nature wherein he suffered; Acts i, 2: providing particularly, that they should not think him now to be a mere spirit, and so to have lost his natural human constitution, Luke xxiv, 39. To confirm our faith in this matter, he appeared afterwards in the same nature to Stephen, Acts vii, 56, and to our apostle, telling him that he was Jesus whom he persecuted, chap. ix, 5, and all to assure us, that he is such an High Priest as is able to be affected with a sense of our infirmities.

§22. Herein lies a great advantage of the church, a great encouragement and support to believers under their infirmities, in their trials and temptations. For,

1. It is some relief to be pitied in distress. The want of this Job pathetically bewailed, chap. xix, 21, "Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me." It went to his heart to find that his friends were not affected with a sense of his sufferings; and it added exceedingly to their weight. Such was the complaint of David, as a type of Christ, Psal. lxxix, 20, "Reproach hath broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness; I looked for some to take pity, but there was none, and for comforters, but there was none." - There is relief

in compassion; some going to the stake have been much refreshed with only a compassionate word whispered to them. And how can it fail to be a cause of great refreshment to believers, in all their hardships and weakness, that they share in the compassion of their High Priest? He is in himself exceedingly great and glorious; is nearly allied to us, able to relieve us, being far superior to our troublers, for they are all under his feet.

2. Herein lies a great encouragement to make our address to him in all our straits and weaknesses. For if he be so concerned, so affected in himself with a sense of them, and have in his holy nature, and on the account of his office, such a propensity and ability to relieve; what should hinder us from making our addresses to him continually for help, and supplies of his assisting grace as our necessities require?

3. Here lies no small warning, how heedfully we should take care that we faint not in our trials. He looks on us with concern, and his honor is engaged in our properly acquitting ourselves. If we have a due regard to him and his love, it will excite us to all care and diligence in the discharge of every duty we are called to, notwithstanding the difficulties it may be attended with.

§23. *Obs.* 5. There will be a season, many a season in the course of our profession, wherein we shall stand in need of special aid and assistance,—“Help in time of need.” This I shall a little enlarge upon: our condition is universally indigent. If we intend to live spiritually, it must be in a constant dependance on God in Christ for supplies; without which we cannot well subsist one moment. But besides that want, which *always* attends our condition in this world, and which God constantly supplies according to the tenor



of his covenant, there are special straits and difficulties to which we are exposed at several seasons.

(1.) A time of affliction is such a season. And the rule of the covenant in sending relief is upon the coming up of the cry of the afflicted unto God, Psal. i, 15; Exod. ii, 23—25. Let men's stock of wisdom, grace, experience, and resolution be what it will, they are not able to go through with the least *new affliction* to the glory of God, without *new assistance* from him.

(2.) A time of *persecution* is such a season; yea, it may be the principal season here intended. And this is the greatest trial that in general God exerciseth his church with. In such a season, some seed quite decayeth, some stars fall from heaven, some prove fearful and unbelieving to their eternal ruin. Carnal fears, with carnal wisdom and counsels, are apt to be at work in such a season; and all the fruit that comes from those evil roots is bitter. Hence many make it their only design, in such a season, to creep through it and live. To be strong in the Lord, and the power of his grace, to the performance of all the duties which the gospel requires, and *as* it requires, they have no design. But by this means as God hath no revenue of glory from them, nor the church advantage, so they will scarce find inward peace when outward trouble is over. This then is a season wherein, if ever, an especial address is needful for special aid.

(3.) A time of *temptation* is such a season. Our apostle found it so, when he had the messenger of Satan sent to buffet him. Thrice did he pray, and cry out for assistance and deliverance, and he got assurance of them both. In reference to this season doth our apostle give that great caution: "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall," 1 Cor. x, 12. And wherein doth this heedfulness principally consist? In an application to him who is faithful, who

will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it, ver. 13, that is, who will give out seasonable help; help in a time of need.

(4.) A time of spiritual *desertion* is such a season. When God in any way withdraws himself from us, we shall stand in need of special assistance: "Thou didst hide thy face," saith David, "and I was troubled." Trouble will ensue on God's hiding himself from us. But this is the mystery of his grace, that when he withdraws himself from any soul, as to sense and experience, whereby it is troubled, he can secretly communicate supporting strength.

(5.) A time wherein we are called to the performance of any great and *signal duty* is such a season. So it was with Abraham, when he was called first to leave his country, and afterwards to sacrifice his son. Such was the call of Joshua, to enter into Canaan, proposed to our example, Heb. xiii, 5, and of the apostles to preach the gospel, when they were sent out as sheep among wolves. Something that is new, that we are yet unexperienced in; something that there is great opposition against, or may cost us dear; somewhat that, as to the state of the inward and outward man, we may seem to be very unfit for; somewhat that the glory of God is in an especial manner concerned in, we may be called to. And there is nothing of this nature which doth not render the time of it a season wherein we stand in need of special aid and assistance.

(6.) Times of difficult *changes* introduce such a season. "Changes and war," saith Job, "are against me," chap. x, 17. There is in all changes a war against us, wherein we may be foiled, if we have not good assistance. Freedom from changes is, in most, the ground of carnal security, Psal. lv, 19. "Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God." Changes we

are continually obnoxious to; no man can enumerate the vicissitudes of our course; yet no one of them can we pass through, in a due manner, without special renewed assistances of grace.

(7.) The time of *death* is such a season. To let go all hold of present things, and present hopes,—to give up a departing soul, entering into—the invisible world—an unchangeable eternity—the hands of a Sovereign Lord,—is what requires strength above our own for its right and comfortable performance.

§24. Now it is easy to apprehend how great an influence these things have on our whole course of walking before God, and how much of our lives and ways is taken up with them. Either afflictions, or persecutions, or temptations, or defections from God, or signal difficult duties, or changes, are continually before us, and the last of them, Death, lies still at the door; and there is none of these but render their seasons “times of need.” It may indeed then be said, wherein doth the *speciality* of the grace and aid mentioned consist, seeing it is that which we *always* stand in need of, and always receive? I answer: that not only *all* grace is special in a sense, but because it is suited to special *occasions*, to be “seasonable help” in a time of need. And although we may stand in need of it always, yet we do not so always on the *same account*, which gives it its speciality. Sometimes one thing, sometimes another, makes it needful and suitable. And God is pleased so to dispose of things, that we shall have occasion at all times to make our applications to him for special assistance. If things were left to an ordinary course, without something *peculiar* to excite and awaken us; it is inconceivable how formal and secure we should quickly grow. Wherefore we have (through divine wisdom) something *always* pressing upon us, to make us intent, earnest, and vigilant in our addresses

to him for help; and the supply obtained affords new spiritual strength for all duties.

§25. The remaining observations are:

1. That there is with God in Christ, God on his throne of grace, a spring of suitable and seasonable help for all times and occasions of difficulty. He is the "God of all grace," and a fountain of living waters is with him, for the refreshment of every weary and thirsty soul.

2. All help, succor, or spiritual assistance in our straits and difficulties, proceed from mere mercy and grace, or the goodness, kindness, and benignity of God in Christ. "That we may receive mercy and obtain grace to help." Our help is from grace and mercy, and thence it must be, or we must be for ever helpless.

3. When we have through Christ obtained mercy and grace for our *persons*, we need not fear but that we shall have suitable and seasonable help for our duties. If we find mercy and obtain grace, we shall have "help."

4. The way to obtain help from God is by a due application of our souls for it to the throne of grace.

5. Great discouragements are used to interpose against our faith, when we would make our application for relief. It is included in the exhortation "to come with boldness," that we cast off and conquer all discouragements.

6. Faith's consideration of the interposition of Christ in our behalf, as our High Priest, is the only way to remove discouragements, and to give us boldness in our access to God. Let us come therefore with "boldness;" that is, on the account of the care, love, and faithfulness of Christ as our High Priest. And we may add,

7. That in all our approaches to God, we are to consider him as on a *throne*. Though it be a throne of grace, yet it is still a throne, the consideration of which should influence our minds with reverence and godly fear.

















